THE HISTORY OF THE CULT OF NARASIMHA IN RAYALASEEMA

DR. N. ADINARAYANA

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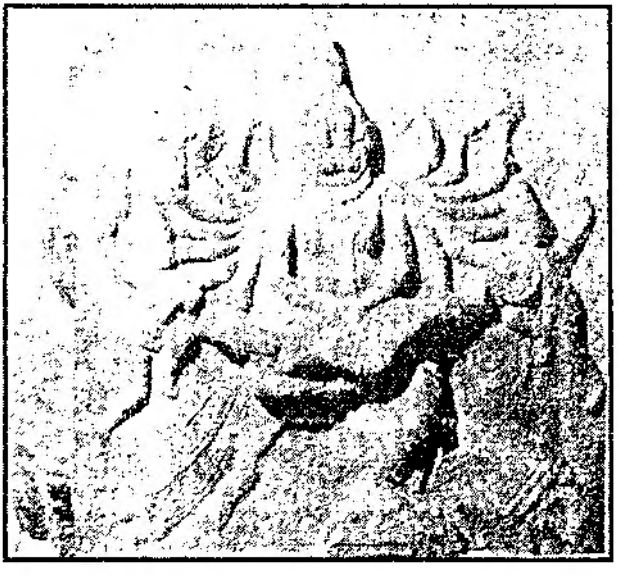

The History of the Cult of Narasimha in Rayalaseema

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Vidara Narasimha on the pillar in the Kalyanamandapa of Sri Venkateswara Temple in Tirumala

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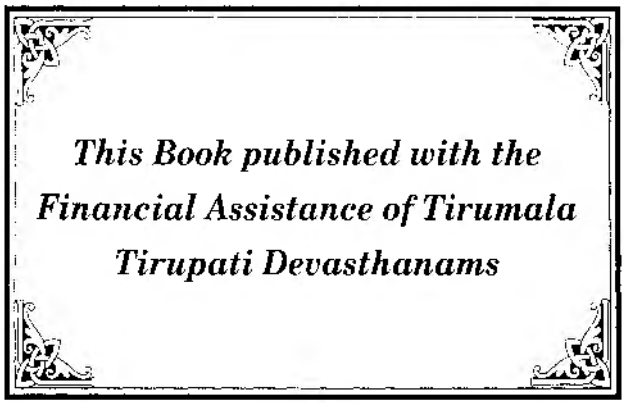
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ABBREVIATIONS

ARE	:	Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy and South Indian Epigraphy.
A.P.G.R.Ep	:	Andhra Pradesh Government Reports on Epigraphy.
ASIAR	:	Archaeological Survey of India - Annual Report
CP	:	Copper Plate
EA	:	Epigraphia Andhrica
EI	:	Epigraphia Indica
Hind. Ico.	:	Hindu Iconography (Gopinatha Rao, T.A.)
IA	:	Indian Antiquary
IAD	:	Inscriptions of Andhra Dēsa (Rama Rao,M.)
IAP	:	Inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh
JAHRS	:	Journal of Andhra Historical Research Society
JNSI	:	Journal of Numismatic Society of India
JTA	:	Journal of Telugu Academy
Mac MSS (S.A.)	:	Mackenzie Manuscripts (A.P. Govt, State Archives Copy and Sahitya Academy)
SII	:	South Indian Inscriptions
TTDI	:	Tirumala Tirupati Dēvasthānam Inscriptions.
TTDER	:	Tirumala Tirupati Dēvasthānam Epigraphical Report.

LIST OF FIGURES AND PLATES

A. **Figures**

1. Andhra Pradesh - Location of Select Centres of Worship of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

2. Yōga Narasimha in the Sanctum of Yōga Narasimha Shrine, Tirumala.

B. Plates

1. Stone plaque showing Narasimha, Peddamudiyam 5th - 6th century A.D.
2. Girijā Narasimha, Tirumala, 15th century A.D.
3. Kevala Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
4. Girijā Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
5. Girijā Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
6. Yōga Narasimha, Peddamudiyam, 16th century A.D.
7. Yōga Narasimha, Peddamudiyam, 16th century A.D.
8. Yōga Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
9. Yōga Narasimha, Kadiri, 15th century A.D.
10. Yōga Narasimha, Kadiri, 15th century A.D.
11. Stambōdbhava Narasimha, Kadiri, 15th century A.D.
12. Stambōdbhava Narasimha, Lower Ahōbilam 16th century A.D.
13. Stambōdbhava Narasimha, Kapilatīrtham, 16th century A.D.
14. Narasimha Fighting the Demon Hiranyakaśipu Upper Ahōbilam, 16th century A.D.

15. Narasimha, Fighting the Demon Hiranyakaśipu, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
16. Narasimha Fighting the Demon Hiranyakaśipu, Paddamudiyam, 15th century A.D.
17. Vidāraṇa Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
18. Vidāraṇa Narasimha, Upper Ahōbilam, 16th century A.D.
19. Vidāraṇa Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
20. Lakshmī Narasimha, Gutti, 14th century A.D.
21. Lakshmī Narasimha, Pennahōbilam, 16th century A.D.
22. Lakshmī Narasimha, Kapilatīrtham, 16th century A.D.
23. Lakshmī Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.
24. Varāha Lakshmī Narasimha, Lower Ahōbilam, 16th century A.D.
25. Narasimha wooing Chenchita, Lower Ahōbilam, 16th century A.D.

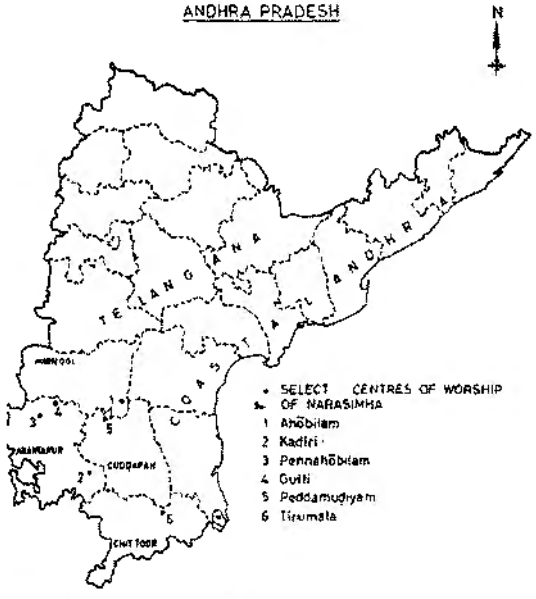

FIG: ANADHRA PRADESH LOCATION OF SELECT CENTRES OF WORSHIP OF NARASIMHA IN RAYALASEEMA

CONTENTS

Page No

CHAPTERS

I INTRODUCTION 1

II ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF THE CULT OF NARASIMHA 18

III GROWTH OF THE CULT OF NARASIMHA IN RAYALASEEMA 40

IV SELECT CENTRES OF WORSHIP OF NARASIMHA IN RAYALASEEMA 67

V RITUALS AND FESTIVALS 106

VI ICONOGRAPHY OF NARASIMHA 135

VII CONLUSION 177

APPENDIX List of the Temples of Narasimha in Rayalaseema 189

REFERENCE GLOSSARY 198

BIBLIOGRAPHY 207

Fig. 2: Yōga Narasimha in the Sanctum of Yōga Narasimha Shrine, Tirumala

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Among the several religious cults in India, the cult of Narasimha is an important one. There are numerous centres of worship of Narasimha spread in different parts of our country. But this cult is more widespread in Andhra Pradesh and a number of temples of Narasimha are found in Andhra Pradesh. In Rāyalaseema of Andhra Pradesh, as per the survey made by me, there are eighty eight temples dedicated to Narasimha. These temples suggest that the cult of Narasimha was popular and widely prevalent in Rayalaseema during 12th - 17th centuries A.D.

1. Review of Literature

In general religious works of India, the space devoted to Narasimha cult is very meagre. Even in the specialised religious works. Like "Development of Religion in South India" by Nilakanta Sastri, the space devoted to this subject is very little.[1] There are separate works on religious sects such as "The origin and Development of Vaishnavism" by Suvira Jaiswal,[2] "Evolution of Hindu sects by Chattopadhaya".,[3] "The Vaishnava sects" "The Saiva sects - "Mother worship" by Swamy Tatwananda.,[4] But these works also contain very little material on this important cult. Of Late, there are some specialised works on cults like "The cult of Vithōba",[5] "The cult of Siva",[6] "The cult of Skandakārttikeya in Ancient India",[7] "The cult of Jagannātha" and[8] "Sakti cult in Ancient India",[9] by distinguished scholars like S.J.G.A. Deleury, V.P. Kanthimathinatha Pillai, Asimkumar Chatterjee, K.C. Misra and Pushpendra Kumar respectively.

There are also some general works dealing with religions in a general way viz., "Religious Institutions and cults in the Deccan" by Ramendranath Nandi,[10] and "Religion in Andhra" by B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao.[11] There are also few published works exclusively dealing with the Narasimha cult, viz., "History of the cult of Narasimha in Telangana" and "The History of the cult of Narasimha in Andhra Pradesh" by M. Narasimhāchārya.[12] In the latter work, the Narasimha cult in Rāyalaseema is dealt with in a fragmentary manner The Present Rāyalaseema, consists of four districts, namely (i) Anantapūr, (ii), Chittoor, (iii) Cuddapah and (iv) Kurnool. The word 'Rāyalaseema' means in Telugu The Seema or 'the land 'ruled over by the Rāyas of Vijayanagara.

From what has been said above, it is clear that till now there is no comprehensive work on the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. As such there is a need for a comprehensive work on 'The cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema and therefore this has been selected for my research work.

2. Scope and Aim of the Study.

The main aim of the study is (i) to study and reconstruct the aspects of origin, antiquity and growth of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema and also (ii) to study the select centres of worship of Narasimha, rituals and festivals performed therein and the iconography of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. The study is from 12th century A.D. to 17th century A.D. The reasons for starting the study from 12th century A.D. are that firstly, before that date, there are only stray references to Narasimha worship from which it is rather difficult to trace out the development of the cult of Narasimha

in Rāyalaseema. Epigraphical references to Narasimha worship are available only from 12th century A.D. Of course, certain Puranic and legendary accounts give information about the worship of Narasimha, but their historic authenticity can not be established. Secondly, it is from that century onwards, the works of Telugu Literature like *Nṛisimhapurāṇa of Errapragada* and certain general Sanskrit works have been available. These contain useful information about Narasimha Mythology and worship. A brief story of Narasimha in *Mōkṣadhārma* of *Anusaśānikaparvam* is given in *Āndhra Mahābhārata* of Nannaya. The *Nṛisiṁhapurāna* of Errapragada was dedicated to God Ahōbila Nṛsimhaswāmy. "The fifth chapter of the *Purāṇa* describes the importance of Ahōbila-Kshētra and the God.[13] The work concludes with the study of the cult in the 17th century A.D. for the following reasons. Firstly, it was in the 17th century A.D. that the Vijayanagara Kingdom which became famous as the saviour of Hindu religion, had finally come to an end. The last known record of the cult during the Vijayanagara period in Rāyalaseema is the grant of Veṇaṭapatirāya-II, dated 1609 A.D. This grant of 1609 A.D. from Chinna Ahōbilam temple attests this fact[14]. After 1609 A.D. there are no epigraphs registering the grants to the temples of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. Thus, the 12th and 17th centuries respectively witness the beginning and end of the vigorous development of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

3. Sources:

The sources for the study of the Narasimha cult in Rāyalaseema from 12th to 17th century A.D. are principally Archaeological and Literary.

1. Archaeological Sources:

The Archaeological sources include (i) inscriptions (ii) temples and (iii) sculptures of Narasimha. These serve as the data for the study of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema and form an authentic source material for this study

(i) Inscriptions :

The cult of Narasimha can be traced from numerous inscriptions incised on rocks, copper plates and in the temples of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. The inscriptions of Western Chāḷukyas, Hoyasalas, Yādavas, Kākatīyas, Reḍḍis of Koṇḍavīdu and Rājahmundry, the Rāyas of Vijayanagar and their feudatory chiefs attest the prevalence of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. There are comparatively fewer inscriptions in the early period (12th and 13th centuries) of our study and as we go on to the later period (Vijayanagara period) there are a number of grants made to the temples of Narasimha by the Rāyas of Vijayanagara and their feudatory chiefs. These epigraphic sources have been used to trace out the growth and development of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema during this period. The inscriptions ranging from 12th to 17th centuries A.D. register the charities of kings, nobles, feudatory chiefs and private individuals to the temples of Narasimha. The inscriptions also register the consecration of images and construction of temples. Further, from the inscriptions we come to know about the renovation of temples, donation of cash and kind, gifts of lands, gardens, construction of *gōpuras, maṇḍapas,* provisions made for offerings and celebration of *utsavas* (festivals), daily worship and the perpetual maintenance of temples by the kings,

nobles and others. The inscriptions of the dynasties viz., Western Chālukyas, Hoyasalas, Yādavas, Kākatīyas, Reddis of Kondavīḍu and Rājahmundry and the Rāyas of Vijayanagara speak of the munificent measures undertaken by them for the development of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

(i) Temples of Narasimha :

The number of temples of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema are greater than those in coastal Andhra and Telangāṇa of Andhra Pradesh. As per the survey made by me, there are eighty eight temples of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. Among them, forty four temples are referred to in the inscriptions, while the rest lack historical material. And of the forty four temples, six temples emerged as major centres, where the daily worship in going on and they can be seen even today. The six major centres of worship of Narasimha are located in Rāyalaseema at Ahōbilam in Kurnool District, Kadiri, Gutti and Pennahōbilam in Anantapur district, Tirumala in Chittoor district and Peddamudiyam in Cuddapah district. These six centres of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema withstanding the ravages of time still speak of their past glory. The main shrine, pillars in the *mandapas* carved with rich sculpture and architecture of the temples throw light on the religious and cultural aspects of cult-history under study.

(i) Sculptures and Images of Narasimha :

The sculptures and the images of Narasimha found in this area throw light on the cult. The origin and antiquity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema can be traced from a stone plaque which is found at Peddamudiyam village in Cuddapah district. In it there is a representation of nine deities including Narasimha which is third in

order from left and it belongs to the 5th-6th century A.D.[15] The sculptures of God Narasimha and Chenchita at Upper Ahōbilam and Lower Ahōbilam speak of the association of God Narasimha with Chenchita, a tribal woman. There are two rare sculptures of Narasimaha on a lion and Narasimha in animal representation as lion on the pillars of the maṇḍapas in the Tirumala temple in Chittoor district. These rare but important sculptures, bring to light certain unknown forms of Narasimha. The select temples of Narasimha and other temples of Vishnu in Rāyalaseema contain innumerable number of images and sculptures on the pillars, walls etc. These images and sculptures serve as the authentic data for the study of the iconographic features of various forms of Narasimha viz., Kēvala Narasimha, Yōga Narasimha, Girijā Narasimha, Sthauna Narasimha, Lakshmī Narasimha and Prahlādanugrahamūrti. The available sculptures and images of Narasimha are also highly useful to compare them with the prescriptions of the Agamic texts, and also to trace out their iconographic peculiarities.

2. Literary Sources

Information regarding the worship and cult of Narasimha is found in a wide range of devotional literature. The literary sources for the study of the cult may be classified into the following categories on the basis of the language in which they have been composed.

(i) Sanskrit :

1.Rāmābhyudayam of Śāḷuva Narasimha :

This is a Sanskrit work by Śāḷuva Narasimha (1486-1491 A.D.), an illustrious king of Vijayanagara and a great devotee of god Narasimha of Ahōbilam. The introduction of *Rāmābhudayam*

clearly refers to the king's birth by the grace of God Narasimha of Ahōbilam. It is mentioned in Rāmābhyudayam that Sāḷuva Gunda who did not have children for a long time, retired to Ahōbilam and made gifts to the Lord. In a dream God Narasimha blessed him with a son, with all virtues. Accordingly King Sāḷuva Guṇḍa had a son, who was named after Narasimha, the God of Ahōbilam.[16]

2. Vāsantika Pariṇayam of Śrīvan Śaṭhakōpayatīndra Mahā Dēśika.

The author is the pontiff of Ahōbila Maṭh, who flourished in circa 1579 A.D. The theme of the story is the marriage of God Narasimha of Ahōbilam with a Chenchu woman of Nallamala forest in Kurnool district. This Sanskrit Drama contains five acts. The hero was Garudāchala Narasimha Swamy of Ahōbilam and the heroine was Vasantika, a tribal (Sabara) woman.[17]

(ii) Tamil :

Peria Tirumozhi of Tirumangai Ālvār

Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār, the last of the Vaishnavite Āḻvars, glorified in ten verses, in his Peria Tirumozhi. The Alvar praises Ahōbilam as 'Śingavēḷkunṛam' which means the youthful lion, a reference to god Narasimha who resides on the hill.[18]

(iii) Telugu :

The following are the Telugu Literary works which supply information directly about the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

1. Narasimha Purāṇa of Erṛapragada

Erṛapragaḍa (1324-1349 A.D.) one of the famous Kavitraya (Trinity) composed *Lakshmī Narasimha Purāna* and dedicated it to God Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy. In the fifth chapter of the purāṇa,

he describes the importance of Ahōbila Kshētra and of the God and mentions the place as a centre of pilgrimage.[19]

2. Sankīrthanas of Thāllapāka Poets

The Tāllapāka Poets such as Annamayya (1408-1507 A.D.) and Peda Tirumalāchāryulu (1460-1547 A.D) composed a number of *Sankīrtanas* (devotinal songs) in praise of Ahōbila Narasimha of Ahōbilam.[20] It is stated that the third Tallapaka poet, Tirumalāchāryulu (1485-1550 A D) had made *'Pratistha* (consercration) of the image of Narasimha in the Hanuman shrine at Tirupati [21] It is stated that Annamayya visited the Ahobilam temple and sang the glory of God Narasimha[22] It is attested by two copper plates of Annamāchārya's *Kīrtanas,* which are found at Ahōbilam.[23] He praised the Lord of Upper Ahōbilam as the boon-giver.

3. Vishnu Purāna of Vennelakanṭi Sūraua

Vennelakanti Sūrana, who flourished in the first part of the 16th century A.D.[24] had translated the Sanskrit Vishnu Purāna into Telugu, named 'Andhra Sri Vishnu Purānam,' describing the incarnation of God Vishnu. The legend of Prahlāda and the birth of God Narasimha and the destruction of the demon, Hiranyakaśipu are narrated in this purāna.

4. Garuḍāchala Vilāsamu of Ōbayamantri

Ōbayamantri, who flourished in the 17th century,[25] wrote 'Garudāchala Vilāsamu', a very popular Yakshagana, describing the supposed marriage of God Narasimha of Ahōbilam with a girl belonging to the Chenchu tribe.[26]

5. Folk Songs

The folk songs also help us to trace out the growth and popularity of the cult among the masses. The God Narasimha is also popular in the themes of folk-songs or the ballads. The folk-songs describe the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of Narasimha (Man-Lion).[27] Further folk-songs which describe the incarnation of Narasimha refers to Śimhādri.[28] Though we cannot establish their antiquity, they help us to trace out the growth and popularity of the cult among the masses.

Besides the above stated literary works, we have the following Telugu literary sources, which make passing references about the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema area.

1. Pratāpa Charitra Of Ēkāmranātha :

It is mentioned in the Pratāpa Charitra of 'Ēkāmranatha' that Ahōbilam and other temples enjoyed the patronage from the treasury of Kākatīya Pratāparudra II[29] (1290-1323 A D)

2. Harivaṁśam (Uttara Bhāgam) Of Erṛapragaḍa :

Erṛapragaḍa wrote *Harivamsam* (Uttara Bhāgam) It is stated in the preface that the ruler Vēma Reḍḍy (1324-53) had built the steps to the upper Ahōbilam.[30]

3. Bhōjarājīyam of Anantamātya :

Anantamātya, who flourished in the fifteenth century A D.,[31] dedicated his work, named 'Bhōjarājīyamu' to God Ahōbila Narasimha, The same God in the beginning and Yōgananda Ahōbalanātha Narasimha at the end are mentioned in it[32]

4. Kāsikhaṇḍam of Śrīnātha :

The popular Telugu romantic poet and 'Kavisārvabhauma',

Śrīnātha wrote 'Sri Kāśikhaṇḍam' and dedicated it to king Vīrabhadra Reḍḍy of Rājamahēndravaram in 1440 A.D.[33] In it, the God of Ahōbilam is mentioned.

Sthalapurāṇas of The Temples:

There are *Sthalapurāṇas* written and published in Telugu and English. They belong to the modern period and help us to know certain traditions of the past which are not recorded in history The Sthalapurāṇas, forming a part and parcel of the traditions, have become powerful instruments for propagating faith in a particular God among the people and thus, the cult developed

Telugu :

There are *Sthalapurāṇas* in Telugu These help us to know certain traditions of the past, which are not recorded in history

(1) Śrī Ahōbila Khsētram, published by the Dēvasthānam of Ahōbilam.

(2) Kadiri Sthalapurānam, published by the temple authorities.

English :

The following *Sthalapurānas* of temples dedicated to God Narasimha are published in English and they belong to the modern period.

(1) History and Sanctity of Sri Ahōbila Kshētra, published by the Dēvasthanam of Ahobilam.

(2) Śrī Ahōbila Kshētra and Ahōbila Maṭh, published by Dēvasthānam of Ahōbilam, 1955.

Manuscripts :

In addition to the above stated literary sources, there are also manuscripts available for the study of the cult of Narasimha in

Rāyalaseema. The manuscripts (MSS) which bear no date are helpful to know something about the cult of Narasimha and popularity of Narasimha centres in Rāyalaseema.

There are six manuscripts of the Ahōbilam temple, which give us some information about the God of Ahōbilam.

(i) Lakshmī Narasimha Vilāsamu :

This is in three 'Aśvasas written by Paiḍipāṭi Venkata Narasimha Kavi. It describes the love of God Narasimha towards a Chenchu girl, Lakshmi and ultimately their reconciliation and marriage.[34]

(ii) Vāsantika Parinayam :

This is an 'Yakshagaṇa' written by Kranja Venkatādri. It refers to the marriage of Ahōbila Narasimha with a Chenchu girl.[35]

(iii) Lakshmī Narasimha Charitramu :

Kaṭṭamañchi Kāmēswara Kavi wrote Lakshmi, Narasimha Charitramu', which is a 'Prabandha' narrating the legend of the incarnation of Narasimha and the greatness of the four shrines, wherein God Narasimha is worshipped, viz., Ahōbila, Harampāpa, krtasanca and Simha Śaila.[36]

(iv) Ahubala Narasimha Śatakam :

It is a *Śataka* of a hundred verses on palm - leaves dedicated to Ahubala Narasimha and the name of the author is not known.[37]

(v) Śikhi Narasimha Śatakamu :

It mentions that Śikhi Narasimha Swamy is residing on a hill of Lower Ahōbilam. It begins with the refrain of 'Śikhi Narasimha' in each verse.[38]

(vi) Narasimha Daṇḍakamu :

This is written by Mungara Appanna. The story of Prahlāda, contained in the *Saptama Skanada of Bhāgavata*, is described in the *'Daṇḍakam'* as narrated by Nārada to Yudhisṭhira. It is dedicated to God Narasimha, Worshipped at Garuḍādri, probably Ahōbilam [39]

Purāṇas :

Apart from the above state sources, we have references to Narasimha in the purāṇas viz., 1 Vāyupurāna, 2. Brahmānda Purāna, 3 Vishnu Purāṇa, 4 Matsya Purāna, 5. Harivamsa, 6 Vishṇu Dharmōttara Purāṇa, 7 Narasimha Purāṇa, 8. Kumāra Purāna, 9 Saura Purāṇa, 10. Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 11. Agni Purāṇa, 12. Nandīya Purāṇa, 13. Linga Purāṇa and, 14 Padma Purāṇa. 'Sri Narasimhamaṅtra ' is given in the *Agni Purāna*. The *Vishṇu Dharmōttara Purāṇa* prescribes the worship of Narasimha for removing all hindrances.[40]

Next to the *Purāṇas*, the works of the poets occupy an important position in preserving and perpetuating the cult of Narasimha. In 'Abhigñāna Śakuntala', Kālidāsa speaks of Narasimha as 'Purusha Kēsari'. [41]

The great advaita preacher and philosopher, Sri Ādi Śankarāchārya, impressed middle class people particularly, the smārthas with his 'Lakshmī Narasimha Sōtram', written in twenty two slokas, invoking the help of Narasimha, when he was in serious trouble.[42] The impact of Sankara on the Smārta Brahmins and on others that the traditions of the worship of Narasimha is still continued by the Brahmins in particular and others in general with a notion that he comes out to their rescue, when they are critically in danger.

Research Design and Methodology

The Methodology followed for this study is as follows.

(i) To study the origin, antiquity and growth of the Narasimha cult and select centres of worship of Narasimha, rituals and festivals performed therein, data has been collected from the relevant epigraphs and from a wide range of devotional literature.

(ii) For the study of the iconographic features of various forms of Narasimha and to take photographs on them, a systematic field survey has been conducted to cover the important centres (temples) of worship of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

The research design of the book is as follows.

The book has Seven Chapters. The first chapter 'Introduction' deals with the review of literature, scope and aim of the study, sources and Methodology and Research Design.

The Second Chapter deals with the 'Origin and antiquity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema'

The Third Chapter deals with 'The Growth of Narasimha cult in Rayalaseema' from 12th to 17th century A.D'.

The select centres of worship of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema are studied in the Fourth Chapter

The Fifth Chapter contains a study of the 'Rituals and Festivals' performed in the select centres of worship of Narasimha in Rāyalasema.

The Sixth Chapter deals with the study of the iconographic features of nine forms of Narasimha represented in the temples under study.

The Last Chapter 'Chapter Seven' 'Conclusion' deals with the review of the cult and its growth and the iconographic peculiarities of the images and sculptures of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

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ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF THE CULT OF NARASIMHA

From the early times, the worship of the 'Avatāras' of Vishnu is an important feature of the Brahmanical religion. The germ of incarnation or *avatāra* concept is to be traced in the *Rigvēda* itself, in an instance - the boar incarnation [1] The earliest reference to Narasimha form of Vishnu is found in the *Taittreya Aranyaka* which alludes to Narasimha (Man - Lion) In it, the earth is said to have been restored from the waters by a black boar with a hundred arms. He is invoked and described as "possessing sharp claws and fangs" [2] In the *Mahā Nārayaṇa Upanishad,* the 'Gāyatrimantra' of Narasimha is given.[3] We have two Upanishads, the *Nṛisimha Pūrava Tapanīya Upanishad* and *Nṛisimha Uttara Utapanīya Upanishad,* which give a full account of greatness of God Narasimha [4] It is stated in the *Narasimha Pūrvatapanīya Upanishad* that Prajāpati practised penance Then he saw the 'Mantrarāja' (Royal formula) related to Narasimha and composed in the Anustubh metre with thirty two syllables. It is said that the prajāpati created the world by means of this formula [5]

When the gods approached Brahma, He told them [6]

"Kshīrō darnava sayinam Nṛikēsari

Vigraham paraṁ padam samajaniyat"

"If one knows the royal formula of god who is lying in the milk of ocean and whose form is Nrisimha, he attains immortality"

As such Mahāvishnu who is lying in the milk of ocean is none other than Nṛisimha. In the above Anustubh (royal formula). it is

stated that there are nine forms of Narasimha, which correspond to the concept of 'Nava Narasimhas' (Nine forms of Narasimha) we have in various parts of Rāyalaseema. The nine forms of Narasimha are[7]

1. Ugra (Angry)
2. Vīra (Fighting)
3 Mahāvishnu (Lakshmī Narasimha)
4. Jvālanta (Emitting flames of Fire)
5. Sarvatōmukh Narasimha (with a number of faces)
6 Narasimha (ordinary Narasimha)
7. Bhīṣaṇam (frightful)
8. Bhadram (adorable) and
9. Mrityōr - mrityu (the killer of death)

The above stated Nine forms (Nava Narasimhas) are still being worshipped in the Ahōbilam temple of Kurnool District in Rāyalaseema. This Ahobilam temple is popularly called 'Nava Narasimha Kshētra' It is stated that the term 'Nava Narasimha' is usually taken to mean the nine forms of Narasimha, which are enumerated below[8]

"It can also be taken to refer to, Navaka Narasimha", Navaka means fresh, new, young, or novice, Lord Narasimha having sprung fresh from a *'stambha'* (Pillar) in response to the prayer of his devotee (Prahlāda) can be called Navaka Narasimha or Sthauna Narasimha. In this form, he looks like a pillar of fire and is ferocious.

Epics :

In addition to the Vēdas, the epics also give information about the god Narasimha and the cult.

In *Mahābhārata,* Narasimha is considered to be one of the incarnations of Vishnu [9] There is a brief story of Narasimha in the Mōksha Dharma of *Mahābhārata*

Bhāgavata :

Bhāgavata which contains the early exposition of the theory of incarnation (avatara) clearly states the purpose of 'avatāra' of Vishnu as follows. For the protection of the virtuous and the destruction of the wicked and for the re-establishment of Dharma, I appear in age after age[10] According to the tradition, the Kritayuga witnessed the fourth 'avatāra' of Vishnu as Narasimha (Man Lion).

Purānas :

The story of Narasimha is found in the Vāyupurāṇa, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, Matsya Purana, Vishnu Purāna, Hari Vamśa, Narasimha Purāna, Kūrma Purāṇa, Saura Purāṇa, Bhāgavath Purāṇa, Linga Purāṇa and Nārada Purāna and in the Uttara Khaṇḍa of Padma Purāṇa. The Narasimha Purāṇa says that the sages came from far and wide, viz., Himālayas Naimisaraṇya, Vindhya mountain, Śrīsaila (Rāyalaseema), Pampa and so on, to Prayāga with their disciples.[11] R.C. Hazra assigns the period of 400 - 500 A.D. for this Purāṇa.[12] "Sri Narasimha Mantra is given in the Agni Purāna" [13] The Vishnudharmōttara Purāṇa prescribes the worship of Narasimha for removing all hindrances".[14]

An interesting feature of the Vishnu Dharmōttara purāṇa is that it refers to the man - lion incarnation in the Madrādēśa,[15] H Rayachaudhuri points out that the Madrakas were a people living in the central Punjab with their capital at Sialkot [16] Till now, the worship of Narasimha is very popular in Punjab, especially in the Kangra

district. Men and women worship this God in the form of a sacred coconut on every Sunday. The Vishnu Dharmōttara Purāṇa is assigned to the period of 400-500 A.D.[17]

Besides the purāṇas, the poetical works have also helped in perpetuating the cult of Narasimha. In "Abhigñāna Sākuntalam", poet Kālidāsa mentions Narasimha as "Purusha Kēsari".[18]

The number of 'Avatāras' (incarnations) of Vishnu varies from 10 to 39 from tradition to tradition But 'Dasāvatāras' (Ten major incarnations) are commonly accepted, of which the fourth is that of Narasimha. It is held that the standard list of the ten incarnations did not find general acceptance before the eight century A.D [19] Although the number of primary incarnations of Vishnu appears to have been fixed quite at ten, their names vary in the list given in the early Purānas

The later Vaishnava literature recognises the following three types of 'Avatāras'[20].

1 Pūrnāvatāra (Complete incarnation)

2. Amśāvatāra (Part of the Divine incarnation)

3 Āvēsa (Partial incarnation of a temporary name)

Several Indian epigraphic records between 4th and 8th centuries A.D attest to the popularity of worshiping different incarnations of God.[21] With the increasing popularity of incarnations, the 'Vyūha' concept receded more into the background Ahirbudhya Samhita, which is one of the earliest Pāñcharātra works, assignable to a date earlier than the 8th century A D ,[22] recognises the five fold forms of the God, they are:

a. Para (transcendent)
b Vyūha (Emnatory i e., Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha)
c. Vibhava (incarnatory)
d. Antaryāmin (immanent) and
e. Arca (that which resides in idols and images in the temples and houses like Svayam Vyakta, Divya, Śiddha, Arsa, Mānusa and Grahārca).

God Vāsudēva as the hero of 'Vrushṇi' vamśa is clearly mentioned in the Mahābhārata. He was later depicted and worshiped along with his brother and sons forming a group of five.[23] Vāsudēva, Samkarshṇa, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, and Śamba were heroes of Vrushṇi race, later on deified. This proposition has been justified by the archaeological evidence. The most interesting of all is the Mōra well inscription, which stands as an evidence for the prevalence of the worship of the images of the Pañchavīras (five heroes) installed in a temple as early as the first century B.C.[24] "Bhāgavatam Vrīshṇam Pañchā Vīranam Pratimah"

The Pañchavīra worship along with god Vishnu as Narasimha finds favour in coastal Andhra Pradesh at Koṇḍamōṭu during the early part of fourth century A.D.[25] As such, this sculptured form found at Koṇḍamōṭu showing Vishnu in the form of Narasimha in an anthropomorphic form, combining human and animal features, is perhaps the first of its kind.

Bhāgavata Movement of the Ālvārs :

The next important stage in the development of the cult of Narasimha is the Bhāgavata movement by the Vaishṇava Ālvārs

and Āchāryas. The Āḻvāṛs played a very significant role in shaping the religious life of the people of the south. The orthodox Vaishnavas believe that the Āḻvārs, who hailed from different parts of the Tamil country,[26] were incarnations of the sacred weapons, the sacred ornaments and sacred vehicles of Vishnu.[27] Regarding the date of the Āḻvārs, there is a controversy. Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyyangar says that the Āḻvārs in all probability flourished in the period marked by the extreme limits of A.D. 500-850.[28] But D.C. Sircar slightly differing from this view states that the Āḻvārs may be roughly placed between 6th and 9th centuries.[29] K.A. Neelakanta Sastri says that "the period of the development of Bhakti movement in south may be said to have lasted from the 6th century to 8th century A.D.[30] In any case, the Ālvārs lived before 900 A.D. Out of twelve Āḻvārs, the following nine had praised and worshiped God Narasimha.

1. Pōygai Ālvār
2. Būtattālvār
3. Pēy Ālvar
4. Tirumalisai Āḻvār
5. Nammāḻvār
6. Periyāḻvār[31]
7. Śūḍikkuḍutta Nāchchiyār (Gōda or Āṇḍaḷ)
8. Tiruppan Āḻvār[32]
9. Tirumangai Āḻvār

The collection of Tamil works by the Āḻvārs, especialy the Tengalai sect is regarded as sacred as the Sanskrit Vēdas.[33] The four thousand hymns of the Āḻvārs have been frequently sung; and the verses are recited in the temples, dedicated to God Vishnu, by the Vaishnavas throughout the country even to this day

The Religious Preachers:

The religious preachers and teachers also contributed their mite for enriching and propagating the cult of Narasimha. Notable among them were Śankarāchārya, Rāmānujāchārya, Kurattālvan, Mādhavachārya, Vēdānta Dēśika, Manavāla Mahāmuni (Varavara Muni), and Śāsta Parānkuśa of Ahōbila math

1. Ādi Śankarāchārya

Ādi Śankarāchārya, (788-820 A D) the greatest Advaita preacher and philosopher, impressed millions of people with his philosophy and illustrious life. The tradition is that Sankara wrote "Lakshmī Narasimha Karavalamba Stōtram", [34] in twenty slōkas (stanzas) invoking the help of God Narasimha, when he was in serious trouble. It is a hymn of praise as the man-lion incarnation of Vishu attributed to Sankaracharya Besides, *Narasimha Pāncharatna Stōtram and Narasimha Stōtram,* [35] are also attributed to him It is stated that in the "Vishnu Sahasranāma Stōtra Bhāsya", Sankara writes that the words Viswam 'Śimha' and 'Sarvapraharayudhah' refer to Śingappirān (Narasimha).[36]

2. Rāmānujāchārya (1017-1137 A.D)

Rāmānujāchārya propagated Narasimha cult along with Vaihanavism. He refers to God Narasimha as "One who killed Hiranya Kaśipu".[37] There is an oral tradition that Rāmānuja visited a number of Vishnu temples in his mission to spread the gospel of Sri Vaisnavism throughout India. It is stated that Tansyādri (Tirupati), Simhāchalam and Śrīkākulam were among the places, visited by Rāmanuja. When Rāmānuja was on tour, he went to Mithila (sālagrāma) and there he visited the temples of Yōganaṅda

Narasimha. There he performed a hōma sacrifice for Narasimha Swamy.

3. Kurattāḷvān

Kurattāḷvān, who is believed to be a contemporary of Rāmānuja, praised God Narasimha in three slōkas. [38]

4. Mādhavāchārya

Mādhavāchārya, lived during the 13th -14th century A.D.[39] He visited a temple of Narasimha in Taulavadēsa, riding on a boy.[40] He also wrote 'Nṛisimha Nakha Stutihi' in two slōkas on seeing the glory of God Narasimha.[41] There is a tradition, that before and after the worship of God, the 'Nakhastutihi' of Mādhava, is recited by all the Mādhvas even now.

5. Vēdānta Dēśika

Vēdānta Dēśika enriched the Vaishnava world with his teachings and writings during 1290-1369 A.D.[42] He praised God Narasimha in his works, namely 'Stōtraṃ[43] and Dasāvatāra Stōtram'. [44] It is also known that he wrote 'Nṛisiṃhāśataka' in eight slōkas in praise of God Narasimha, which is preserved in the government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras.

6. Manavāḷa Mahāmuni

Manavāla Mahāmuni alias Varavaramuni lived from 1370 A.D. to 1456 A.D[45]. He was the acknowledged prophet of Tenkali sect of Sri Vaisnavism,[46] wrote 'Nrisimhaśatakam' in Sanskrit, praising God Narasimha in eight stanzas.[47]

7. Sāsta Parānkuśa of Ahōbila Maṭh

Parānkuśa, was the sixth of the apostolic line of the Ahōbilamaṭh. He is mentioned in an inscription of 1555 A.D. in the

Ahōbilam Temple.[48] He is said in the 'Satsamprādaya-muktāvaḥ' to be a contemporary of king Sadāśiva of Vijayanagara.[49] It is stated that he was the author of a number of works, including 'Nṛisimha Stava'[50] which is the collection of hymns in praise of God Narasimha.

The Cult of Narasimha in India in Early and Medieval Periods

The cult of Narasimha prevailed in India in the early and medieval periods. This is attested by the epigraphic evidence. Sewell enumerates no less than forty kings of the early and medieval periods, who bore the name of Narasimha.[51]

According to D C Sarkar, the fact that the mention of 'Avatāra' in the records and 'Simha' instead of Narasimha may suggest that the deity was conceived by some as the form of a lion and not as the combined form of man and lion.[52] The patronage of the cult by the Gupta kings is attested by their coins and the sculptures relating to the period. Several copper coins of Rāma Gupta (370 - 375 A D) depict the lion with upraised tail on one side and the name of Rāma Gupta on the other.[53] The stately lion's figure resembles those found on several Mālva and Nāga coins and on some clay ceilings from Bāsara and Bhita.[54] Chandra Gupta - II (375-414 A.D.) issued four types of coins with the figure of a lion on each variety.[55] On the coins of the lion trampler type of the illustrious king Kumāra Gupta-I (414-455 A.D.), the circular legend is as follows.[56]

"Saksadiva Narasimha Simha Mahēndra Jayatyanisam", "Narasimha as it were incarnate (king) Mahēndra (as it were) among the lions, is ever victorious"

The explanation of the king as an incarnation of God Narasimha is obvious. One of the most interesting early representations of the Narasimha incarnation is executed on a seal found at Basarh, datable to the Gupta period. [57] In addition to the coins and seals, there are a number of sculptures of Narasimha, found during the Gupta period. The earliest extant icons of Vishnu incarnations, the Boar, man-lion and Dwarf are assigned to the Gupta period.[58] The Gwalior Museum has also a Narasimha image found at Bēsnagar, belonging to the Gupta period. [59]

The contribution of Guptas for the enrichment and propagation of the cult of Narasimha in Northern India is very significant. D.C. Sircar mentions that "the writers on the history of Vaisnavism have succeeded in tracing the mention of the 'Narasimha Avatāra' in no inscription earlier than the Alina copper plate record of the Maitraka dynasty of the Vallabi in Kathiawar (Gujarat state), which was issued in the year 766 A.D [60]

The Narasimha cult spread in all the directions of the country-North, East, and West. Among the medieval kings of Eastern India, king Lakshmaṇasēna is described as 'Parama Narasimha' in the epigraphic records of the Sēna dynasty.[61]

In the south, the cult of Naraṣimha was also popular and it was patronised by a number of ruling dynasties. The Western Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi (Vātāpi) were the great builders of temples and patrons of art. The cave No. 3, a Vaishnava cave dated 578 A.D. at Bādāmi in the Bījapūr district of Karnāṭaka, contains a finest relief of Narasimha.[62]

The earliest known image of Narasimha in Tamil Nadu, is that of a two armed seated figure. The figures are executed in low relief on a slab, found in Munnār of South Arcot district. It is stated that the slab with images, may be assigned to the early Pallava period, i.e , about the beginning of the 7th century A.D.[63] Another representation of the seated two armed Narasimha, along with Lakshmi in the form of Śrīvatsa in padmāsana, on a similar plaque of the same period, is found at Manimangalam in the Chingleput District.[64] Besides king Gunaseela of the Atiyamāṇ or Ādigaimāṇ chiefs, ruling over the northern part of Kongu country in the Southern Tamil Nadu, excavated an extra ordinary cave temple of Lakshmi Narasimha at Namakkal in Salem district some time between 700 and 750 A D [65] The Pallavas of Kāñchipuram occupy a position of considerable importance in the annals of India for their contribution to art and architecture. There is panel in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchipuram, which depicts the fight between Narasimha and the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu and it is assigned to the 8th century A D [66]

In the South, the Rāstrakūṭas occupy a significant place for their contribution to the cave temples of Ellōra, near Aurangabād in Maharāstra. Cave No. 15 is known as 'Dasāvatāra cave' at Ellōra, which contains vigorous sculptures and an inscription, which is in Sanskrit and the letters of about 700 750 A D [67] The cave No 16 of Kailāsanātha temple dating from the later part of 8th to early 9th century A.D. is a magnificent creation.[68] In the Kailāsa cave next to Trivikrama and Siva, the Narasimha panel is carved [69]

The inscriptions of the Cholas throw a flood of light on the temples of Narasimha and the festivals performed therein. An inscription of Rājēndra - I, dated A.D. 1036, mentions the temple of Alagiya Narasimha perumal alias Raja Vinnnagar of Ennāyiram and the deity as Śingvēlkunraivār (Narasimha) [70]. Another inscription of king Rājēndra-I from the Alagiya Narasimha perumāl temple, refers to an endowment of land made for offerings, festivals, the recitation of Tiruvōymoli and for the maintenance of an institution for higher learning for the teaching of Vēdas, Vyakarana, Mimāmsa and Vēdānta.[71]

The gold coin issued by king Narasimha - II (1220-1235 A.D.) depicts God Narasimha seated in *padmasana* posture on one side and in the form of a lion on the other side [72].

The patronage of the cult of Narasimha by the Western Chālukyas, Hoyasalas, Kākatīyas, Reḍḍy Kings and the Vijayanagara Kings is dealt with separately in the third chapter "Growth of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema".

The impact of the cult of Narasimha may be seen in Kalinga during the later Gaṅga period. It may be of interest to note that the kings, who followed Anaṅga Bhīma - III, came to be called after Vaishnavite gods like Narasimha and Bhānu Dēva. This change is known to have taken place on account of the advent of Narasimha Yati from 1230 A.D [73]. Another prominent figure after Narasimha Yati in Kalinga was that of Narahari Tīrtha, who was the governor of Kaliṅga and lived in the reign of Narasimha - I (1245-64 A.D.) Bhanudēva - I (1264 - 79) and Narasimha Dēva - II (1279-1306 A.D.).[74] After the fall of Gangas, the Gajapatis of Orissa continued

to patronise the cult of Narasimha. This is confirmed by their grants to the Simhāchalam temple in Visākhapaṭnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

The Cult of Narasimha in Āndhradēśa

The general history of Narasimha cult in the country has been given in the preceeding pages. Here a brief history of the cult in Āndhradēśa from the earliest times to the end of the 10th century A D is attempted with a view to providing the background for the study of the cult from 12th to 17th century A D in Rāyalaseema.

The early Bhāgavata religion had incorporated the worship of Vāsudēva-Krishna or Pañchavīras. This has been confirmed by the archaeological sources. During the Sātavāhana period, in the Western Deccan, the prevalence of Bhagavatism is mentioned by the Nānēghaṭ cave inscription of queen Nāgānika, wife of Sātakarni I, the third king of the Sātavāhanās. It begins with an invocation to Sankarshaṇa and Vāsudēva and several other divinities.[75] The most interesting is the more well inscription from Mathura which refers to the establishment of the images of Pañchavīras (Five heroes-Vāsudēva, Sankarshna, Aniruddha, Pradhyumna and Śāmba) of the Vrishni clan, installed in a temple [76] as early as the first century B.C.[77] This type of worship of Pañchavīras along with Vishnu in the form of Narasimha, became popular in coastal Āndhra during the early part of 4th century A D.[78] A rare sculptured panel of Pañchavīras along with Vishnu as Narasimha was found over a hillock in a square shrine of bricks at Koṇḍamōtu on the outskirts of Piḍugurāḷḷa village which is nearly 64 kilometers from Guntūr in Andhra Pradesh,[79] This sculpture is now preserved in the office of

the department of Archaeology and Museums at Hyderabad. This panel represents Narasimha and Pañchavīra worship The central figure of the panel is a lion figure with two human hands and the Male organ is but which denotes holding up of sensual pleasures by being a Yogin. The noteworthy feature of God Narasimha is that the figure is Zoomorphic, excepting the two human hands.[80] This panel shows Narasimha in anthropomorphic form and also in animal form. This is perhaps the first and earliest extant one Scholars pointed out that stylistically this panel belongs to the late phase of the Ikṣvakas, as is evidenced by the head-gear and drapery ornaments like makarakuṇḍalas, armlets, necklaces [81] J N Benerjea opines that this unique representation of Narasimha is related stylistically to the Nāgārjuna sculptures.[82] It is said that the sculpture bears continuity of the tradition of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa art and can be placed in 3-4th century A.D.[83] On the other hand M Rama Rao assigned this sculpture to the Vishṇukuṇḍin period [84]

Thus, Āndhra Dēsa had the roots of the cult of Narasimha from Koṇḍamōṭu in coastal Āndhra at an early period and from this place it is likely to have spread to the Rāyalaseema and to the South through the Pallavas and the Chāḷukyas. As regards the Pallavas of the early Sanskrit Charters, they are known to us from their copper plate grants discovered mainly in the Nellore - Guntūr area.[85] It is pointed out that the Pallavas, who in the second century A D were subordinates of the Āndhras in the Godavari - Krishna, Delta, succeeded them in rule in the 3rd - 4th centuries and from 600 to 750 A.D. had been the chief power on the east-coast.[86] It appears that the Pallavas were the worshippers of Narasimha as known from

their very names. We have in early inscriptions names like Simhadatta (Simhadatta, dedicated to the lion or man-lion form of Vishnu) and Siha Rakshita (Simha Rakshita, protected by the Simha or Narasimha - incarnation) in Prakrit inscriptions of first and second century A.D from Sañchi, Mathura and other places [87] In the south, most of the early Pallavas were devotees of Vishnu, in the form of Narasimha, as indicated by their very names Names like Simhavarman, Simhavishnu and Narasimhavarman were popular kings in the Pallava dynasty of South India [88] The earliest such name in the family of Pallava kings is that of Simhavarman of Mañchikallu (Guntur Dt., A.P) inscription assignable to the last decade of 3rd century A.D or 290 A.D [89]

The Cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema

The effect of the cult of Narasimha may be seen in Rāyalaseema We have a sculptural representation of Narasimha of 6th century A.D which comes from Peddamudiyam village of Cuddapah District.[90] It is assigned to the Vishṇukuṇḍin period (5th - 6th A.D.) by M. Rama Rao [91] D C Sircar points out the fact that the 'Avatāra' is often mentioned in early records as 'Simha' instead of Narasimha, may suggest that the deity was once conceived by some in the form of a lion, not the combined form of Man and Lion.[92] In the South, lion was the emblem of the early dynasties of Āndhra Dēśa, the Ikṣvākus, Vishṇukuṇḍins and the early Chōlas.[93] In the sculptures of Ikṣvākus and later of Vishṇukuṇḍin period, the lion symbol is prominent and it is found on the seals of the Vishṇukuṇḍin Charter.[94] Besides coins, the Mogalrājpuram caves of the Vishṇukuṇḍins have the sculptures of Varāha and the destruction of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu by Narasimha According to Mackenzie reports, there is a shrine of Narasimha within the temple

of Bhāva Nārāyaṇa śwāmy at Bāpatla of Guntūr district which is assigned to 593 A.D. [95] In the seventh century A.D., a few coins of the Eastern Chāḷukyan kings contain on the obverse the figure of a lion[96].

Thus, the sculptures, the coins and the temple of Narasimha give us, some information about the cult of Narasimha. The concept of incarnation of Vishnu appears to have been popular in Āndhra Dēśa during the 9th century A.D. The Vibhava or incarnatory aspect of Vishnu is illustrated by a Dasāvātara panel of 9th century presently preserved in the State Museum at Hyderabad [97] A similar panel of Dasāvatāras of the same century from Yēllēsvaram in Nalgonda district, is exhibited in the State Museum at Hyderabad. This panel belongs to the late Pallava period [98]

In the Rāyalaseema region, the antiquity of the cult of Narasimha can be gleaned from a stone plaque found at Peddamudiyam village in Cuddapah district. This is the earliest sculpture and in it there is a representation of nine deities including Narasimha, which is third in order from the left and it belongs to the 5th or 6th century A.D. at the earliest.[99] Sivaramamurti states that this sculpture belongs to the 6th century A.D.[100] From 11th century onwards, we have the works of Telugu literature like *Āndhra Mahābhārata* and *Narasimha Purāṇa* which contain information about Narasimha mythology and worship. From 12th century onwards, we also have sufficient epigraphic evidence to trace out the growth of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

The next chapter *'Chapter Three'* will show how the cult of Narasimha had slowly and steadily grown from 12th to 17th century A.D.

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GROWTH OF THE CULT OF NARASIMHA IN RĀYALASEEMA

(From 12th to 17th Century A.D)

The growth of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema from 12th to 17th century A.D is dealt with in this chapter. From 12th to 17th century A.D, the cult of Narasimha spread by leaps and bounds. During this period, the cult was patronised by different dynasties that ruled over Rāyalaseema. They were the Western Chāḷukyas and their feudatories, Hoyasalas, Yādavās, Kākatīyas, Reḍḍis of Kondavīḍu and Rājahmahēndravaram, the Rāyas of Vijayanagara and their feudatories, the Nandyāla chiefs. In addition to the roya. grants made to the temples, there were private grants also given to the temples of Narasimha with a sense of devotion and dedication to the God

Western Chāḷukyas (973 - 1198 A.D.)

The Western Chāḷukyas had control over parts Cuddapah and Kurnool districts of Rāyalaseema in 11th century A.D. The earliest record of their reign in the Rāyalasema region, in connection with the growth of the Narasimha cult, was found in the Narasimha temple at Peddamudiyam in Cuḍḍapah District. It is dated in 1124 A.D[1]. It refers itself to the reign of Tribhuvana Malladēva and mentions his feudatory, the Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Chiḍḍaṇṇa - Chōḷa Mahārāja, who is stated to have made a grant of the village Mudiyam to the 'Mahājanas' of the place in the presence of God Narasimha dēva of Ahōbila. During the reign of king Vikramāditya-VI, we have an inscription of Kandūri Gōkarṇa Chōḍa Mahārāja (1105-1140)

A.D.), who was feudatory to Vikramāditya-VI. The inscription is dated as 'Saumya', the Telugu year (1129-30 A.D.)[2] which falls in 1129-30 A.D. It registers the provision made for 'naivēdya' to Sri Narasimha Dēvara by Keyidēva, Daṇḍanāyaka of Mahāmaṇḍalēswara Kandūri Gōkarnadēva Chōḍa Mahānāyaka.[3] The last record of the Western Chāḷukyas belongs to the reign of Bhūlōkamalla Sōmēśwara-III, dated in 1137 A.D. It records the gift of the village Badam beyyamgeri as 'Sarvāmaṇya to God Narasimhadēva of Tumbalabīdu Sindavāḍi Paṭṭana by Mahāpradhāna Sēnādhipati Kaḍita, Verggaḍa, for expenses towards the repairs and up-keep of the temple, worship and offerings, perpetual lamps, feeding of the 'Parichāra Brāhmaṇas' etc., in the temple.[4] The village Pedda Tumbalam is in Kurnool District of Rāyalaseema. Thus, during the rule of the Western Chāḷukyas, the cult of Narasimha received patronage in the areas corresponding to the present Cuḍḍapah and Kurnool Districts in Rāyalaseema.

Hoyasalas (1100-1342 A.D.) :

The cult of Narasimha was also popular among the Hoyasalas. An inscription from Jeelavāripalli of Cuḍḍapah District, dated in 'Raktākshi', the Telugu year which corresponds to 1144-45 A.D. during the reign of King Hoyasala Ballaladēva, registers some gifts to God Vīra Narasimha at the instance of the king by his feudatories.[5]

Yādavas (1187-1311 A.D.) :

During the reign of Yādavas, the cult appears to be a prominent one in the Kurnool District. A record of the Yādavas from Chinna Tumbalam in Kurnool District, dated in 1229 A.D. mentions that one Anantapriya set up the image of God 'Yōgananda Narasimha

Dēva' to the North tank, situated to the west of the village 'Tumbaḷa' during the reign of king Jaitugi.[6]

Kākatīyas (1000 - 1323 A.D) :

Kākatīya Pratāparudra proved his sense of devotion to the Lord of Ahōbilam There is an interesting tradition about Pratāparudra (1295-1323) for his veneration to god Ahōbalēsvara of Ahōbilam in Kurnool District. There is a private grant made to the god during this period [7]

Reḍḍis of Kondavīdu: (1325 - 1424 A.D.)

The Reḍḍis of Kondavīḍu were sincere devotees of God Narasimha and a number of their liberal grants to the temples supports this view. Prōlaya Vēma Reddy (1324-1353), the founder of this line ruled his kingdom from Addanki An inscription of 1335 A.D. from Chīmakurti, states that he built steps to Ahōbilam i e , Upper Ahōbilam [8] Another inscription dated in 1345 A.D. from Amarāvati, confirms the noble work done by him.[9] His son Anavēma Reḍḍy followed the father in patronising the cult of Narasimha He constructed the flight of steps to Ahōbilam i e., Upper Ahōbilam in 1378 A.D [10] His successor Kumāragiri Reḍḍy made liberal grants to the temple and strengthened the cult of Narasimha. 11

Reddys of Rājahmahēndravaram: (1395-1448 A.D.)

The Reddys of Rājahmahēndravaram were also patrons of art and letters. It seems that they were devotees of Lord Narasimha as known by their grants 'Katama Reḍḍy Vēmareḍḍy' made gift of the village, Kaluva Cheru, surnamed "Komaragiripuram" to provide daily offerings to Ahōbaladēvara of Ahōbilam in 1410 A.D.[12]

Rāyas of Vijayanagara (1336-1680 A.D) :

Rāyalaseema was included in the Kingdom of Vijayanagara from the time of its foundation and continued as part of it till the time of it's fall. The Vijayanagara rulers were staunch devotees and upholders of the Hindu 'Dharma'. The period of the rule of Saṅgama, Śāḷuva, Tuḷuva and Āravīdu dynasties of Vijayanagara constitutes the most brilliant epoch in the history of Rāyalaseema region and its temples. The Vijayanagara kings were also popular as patrons of art and letters. Their period witnessed considerable growth of the cult of Narasimha and its popularity in Rāyalaseema. From 14th to 17th century A.D , under the fervent patronisation of the Rāyas, the cult had grown in popularity by leaps and bounds There are innumerable number of inscriptions which mention the grants made to the temples of Narasimha by the kings, and their feudatories, nobles and others

Sangama Dynasty :

Harihara-II (1377 to 1404 A.D) was a staunch devotee of Narasimha. He struck coins with the emblem of Lakshmi Narasimha and built a 'Divya Maṇṭapa' for Ahōbila Sri Narasiṃha in 1395 A.D.[13] Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara also shared the patronage of the cult of Narasimha. Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, Māṇḍalika, Karigaṇḍa, Śrīmatprada, Vodayalu made a provision for the mid-day offering to God Ahōbalavīra Narasiṃha Dēvara in 1342 A.D.[14]

There are eight grants made to the temple during the reign Bukka-I. The first inscription of his reign states that Mangayadēva, son of Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, made a gift of village for providing 'Angaraṅga Bhōgas' to Vōnūtala Ahubaladēvara in 1350 A.D.[15]

The second inscription of his regn, states that one Chalināyaka completed the construction of the *maṇḍapa* of Aubhaladeva temple in Kadiri in the year 1352 A.D.[16] The third inscription of 1353 A.D states that one Gōpana, an officer, made a gift of an ornament to the temple at Kadiri [17] The fourth inscription from Patnam of 1367 A.D mentions the grant of land for food offerings to God Ahōbala Dēva of Kadiri by one Bammināyudu [18] The fifth inscription registers a provision made for the *Angaraṅga Bhōgas* of Śrī Ahōbala Dēvara of Vōgunutala by Mangayadēva, son of Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara in the year 1369 [19] The seventh inscription dated in 1375 A D. records the renovation of a temple dedicated to Yōgānanda Narasimha Swamy at Gaṇḍikōta.[20] The last record of Bukka-I known from the Gooty Kaifiyat, refers to the consecration of the image of Lakshmī Narasimha on the hill of Gooty [21] An inscription from Jillavāndlapalle in Cuḍdapah District, records grant of land to Ahōbila Vīra Narasimha by the subordinates of Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Vīra Ballaladēva Maharāja in the 14th century A.D [22] Thus, the kings and Mahāmaṇḍalēśwaras were the patrons of the Narasimha temple in the 14th century A.D and contributed their mite for the growth of Narasimha cult. - There are two grants made to the temples of Narasimha during the regn of Dēvarāya-II (Prouda Dēvarāya) (1422 1446 A D) Mānūri Dēvara granted certain taxes for performing divine service to Narasimhadēva in 1443,[23] and the other record of Dēvarāya's reign, states that a temple for Narasimha was built in the village Bommavaram and a piece of land was given as a gift to the God.[24] There is a solitary grant during the reign of Mallikārjuna (1447-65 A.D.). Gōpayadēva Mahārāja,

son of Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Pinnayadēva Mahārāja, made an endowment of the village, Jillēḷḷa for daily 'Naivēdya' to Ahōbilēśwara of Ahōbilam.[25]

Śāḷuva Dynasty :

Śāḷuva Naraśimha appears to be a great devotee of Lord Narasimha. In the introduction of his work *Rāmābhyudayam,* Śāḷuva Narasimha states that he was born by the grace of the God Narasimha of Ahōbilam.[26] An inscription of 1485 A.D records the installation of the image of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on the pathway over the Sēshādri Hills leading to Tirumala Hills by Śāḷuva Narasimha.[27] He also constructed a well with stone steps on the south side of the 'Gōpuram' of the Narasimha temple in 1490 A.D.[28] It is stated that the big 'Gōpuram' of the Narasimha temple was the charitable service of a certain individual during the reign of Narasimha, in 1490 A.D.[29]

Tuḷuva Dynasty :

The cult of Narasimha was on increase during the reign of Tuḷuva dynasty. Krishnadēvarāya, who was popular as the patron of arts and letters, was a great devotee of Lord Narasimha as known from the charities made to the temples of Narasimha. There are nine grants made to Lord Narasimha of various places during his reign from 1512 A.D. to 1529 A.D. It is stated that the king having started out on a campaign of conquest to Kalinga, visited Ahōbila enroute and made gift of one thousand *varāhas,* a necklace, a ruby and a diamond pendent inset with an emerald, a pair bracelets, and a gold plate to the deity in 1515 A.D. His queen also made a gift of pendent. Further the village Madura was granted for the worship

and offerings to the God [30] During the reign of Krishnarāya, Timmarasu Yerramanāyudu made a grant of land for the *angaranga bhōgas* of Ahōbila Sri Narasimhadēva of Pottipāḍu in the year 1529 A.D.[31] There is another grant of land to God Narasimha of Kadiri by a certain Venkatanāyudu for worship and offerings to the God in 1529 A.D. during the reign of the king.[32] The last record of the king Śrī Krishnadēvarāya patronising the cult of Lakshmi Narasimha is that of 1529 A D. from Beḍadūr, which records a gift of land to Ahōbala Sri Narasimhadēva for 'aṅgaraṅgabhōgas' of the Lord.[33]

Achyutarāya (1530-1542 A.D.), the successor of Krishnadēvarāya, appears to be an ardent devotee of Lord Narasimha He struck the coins with the emblem of Gaṇḍabhēruṇḍa,[34] which is strongly believed to be an aspect of Narasimha. There are a number of grants made to the temples of Narasimha during the reign of Achyutarāya. An inscription of 1532 A.D. records a gift of lands to God Ahōbaleswara of Ahōbilam by Abbirāju of Pōrumāmulla.[35] Another grant of similar nature was made in 1533 A.D for the service of God Ahubaladēva at Chāgalēru by a certain Kampadēvarasa Anna, for the merit of the king.[36] Mahāmaṇḍalēswara Sālaka Rāju Chinna Tirumalayya Dēva Mahāraju, gave a gift of a few acres of wet land to God Maṇḍem Narasimhadēva of Dharmavaram in the year 1533 A.D.[37] Besides, another grant of certain taxes was made to God Aubalēswara of Vōngunūtala in 1534 A.D by Bacharus, a *Kāryakarta* of the king, who ruled Gaṇḍikōṭaseema.[38] Grants made to the temples for worship and Naivēdya to the God precede the other grants An epigraph of 1535 A.D from Ahōbilam, records some grants to

Viṭhalam Anantappa by Purushōthama Jīyar of the temple for offerings to God of Ahōbilam on certain occasions.[39] In the year 1538 A.D. during the reign of the king, Rāmachandra Dīkshitula Ayyavāru, ruler of Pāgulla Seema, gifted the village, Kurumāla under his nāyaṅkara to Sri Narasimhadēva of Kadiri for the merit of the king.[40] In the same year Kadirinātha gave a lamp post to God Ahōbala Narasimha.[41] There are also certain grants made to the Lord during the reign of king Achyuta Rāya, but they are undated. Such a grant was that of Tāllapakam Tirumalai Ayyaṅgār, who made a provision for *'Dhanurmāsa pūja'* offerings to Sri Narasingaperumāl [42] Another grant of money was made by Kandāḍai Kumāra Rāmānujayyangār, the manager of gold treasury of Sri Venkatesa, for the occasional offerings to Sri Narasimha and others abiding in Tirupati.[43]

The reign of Sadāśiva is a land mark and an epoch making one in the history of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema, because during this period there were more than fifty grants made to the temples of Lakshmī Narasimha. His officers also shared the contribution for the growth and the popularity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. An inscription from Mādūru, dated in 1544 A.D records the gift of a village to the Rāmānujakūtam (Feeding House) at Ahōbilam by Chinna Timmaṟāja, an officer of the king.[44] The sons and grand sons of the Mahāmaṇḍalēśwaras in their devotion to the Lord Narasimha made a number of grants to the temples. In 1545 A.D. Ahōbalayyadēva Mahārāja, grand-son of Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Narasimhulu Śiṅgarayyadēva Mahārāja, gave a gift of land for conducting the 'utsavas' of Lakshmi Narasimha at

Irnakaḷḷu.[45] Another epigraph of the same period and the reign records that an endowment of the village Toṇḍaladinne was made by the ruler Timmayadēva Mahārāja, son of Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Rāmarājugari Kaṇḍarāju for offering cakes to Sri Ahōbila Narasimha Dēva.[46] Karaṇas (village officers) and other petty officers of the king came ahead with grants to be made to the temples with a deep sense of devotion to Lord Narasimha. A record of 1545 A.D. from the Upper Ahōbilam temple states that Karaṇam Bhūmarusu made an endowment of land for providing daily ōffering and other rituals to the Lord of Ahōbilam [47]

Nandyāla Chiefs :

The chiefs of Nandyāla family were the devotees of Lord Narasimha. It is stated that the princes of Nandyāla family continued to rule their chief-ship with Nandēla as their capital under the control of the Rāyas of Vijayanagara. Hence their sons and grand sons came to require the family appellation 'Nandēla' i .e., Nandyāla.[48] The Nandyāla chiefs, the feudatories of Vijayanagara were closely associated with the Ahōbilam temple.

Vēdāntha Śathakōpa Jīyar, the fifth pontiff of (Piṭādhipathi) of Ahōbila Maṭh was said to be the spiritual guru of the chiefs of Nandyāla family[49] The chiefs, under the influence of the fifth pontiff of Ahōbila math, made a number of grants with a sense of pious devotion and dedication to Lord Narasimha. It is attested by an inscription of 1545 A.D. which records the gift of income from certain tolls to certain Gōvindayya, the *Sthānapathi* of Ahōbila Narasimhadēva, for maintaining worship etc , to Lord Narasimha by Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Nandyāla Timmayadēva Mahārāja of

Gaṇḍikōṭa-Rājya.[50] Thus, Nandyāla Chiefs became the devotees of God Narasimha. Besides, Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Rāghava Rāju granted certain taxes for maintaining lamps to God Aubhalēswara of Periyavaram in the year 1545 A.D [51] In the same year Chinna Timmarāju, an officer of King Sadāśiva, granted a village to Ahōbalēśwara.[52] Another Mahāmaṇḍalēswara, Śrīnātharāja Rāmayyadēva Mahārāja gave a gift of land to the temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in the year 1546 A.D [53] There is another grant made to the temple of Ahobila by Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Nandyāla Timmayadēva Mahārāja in 1547 A.D which records the remission of 'mārga-śunkam' and other taxes on rice, and salt etc., carried in the bullock-carts to Ahōbila from Udayagiri-Seema and Salkiseema for the worship and offerings to the God.[54]

Grants to the temples of Narasimha went on unabated. Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Chenna Kēsavarāju made a grant of land for daily offerings to god Narasimha of the village Bommavaram, in the year 1547 A.D.[55] Grants for the maintenance of the temples were common in those days Timmayadēva Mahāraja son of Mahāmaṇḍalēswara Rāmarājugāri Koṇḍarāju gave a gift of the village, Toṇḍaladinne, for *Abhishēkam* to the deity *(Pulikāpu Kainkaryam)* on every Friday and offering of cakes to God Ahōbala Narasimha dēva in the year *Plavaṅga,* during the reign of Sadāśiva,[56] corresponding to A.D 1547-48 An inscription of 1548 A.D. from Upper Ahōbilam of the reign of Sadāśiva, records the grant of a village, Jambuladinne for providing six plates of offerings, called 'Srinagara Taliga', to God Ahōbilēswara by Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Nandyāla China Avubhalayya.[57] Another

inscription of the same year, records the grant of a village Yaragudi by Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Nārayadēva Mahārāju, the son of Nandēla Narasiṅgaya dēva Mahārāja, to the God of Ahōbilam.[58] Further, in the year 1549 A.D. Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara, Apratimalladēva Māhāraja made the grant of the village of Kuhuvaram for worship and offerings to God Sri Lakshmī Narasimha of Tangēda.[59] Nobles and their sons had taken up good service works like raising the gardens, digging tanks and so on. Ahubhalarāju, the son of Timmayadēva Mahārāja, gave a gift of piece of land in the village of Ālamūru in 1550 A.D for raising a garden with coconut and other trees in favour of the God Ahōbalēśwara.[60]

The Nandyāla chiefs, who were devotees of Lord Narsimha as mentioned earlier, continued their patronage to the Narasimha Temples. An inscription of 1550 A.D. records a endowment of land for providing mid-day offering to God Sri Narasimha of Animela Konda Śinga, by Timmarāja, the son of Nandyāla Timmayadēva Mahārāja.[61] Another chief of Nandyāla family Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Nandēla Pina - Avubhalēśwaradēva Mahāraja made a grant of land in 1551 A.D to Vamana Nārāyaṇa Jīyar, probably the priest of Narasimha temple and the disciple of Saṭagōpa Jīyar, probably the pontiff of Ahōbalamaṭh in the presence of God Narasimha on the bank of the river Pinākini [62]

There are some private grants made now and then to the Narasimha temples during the protracted reign of King Sadāśiva. Chinna Basavayya, son of Vīramushti Bhūpayya, made a gift to Sri Narasimha Dēva of Brāhmaṇamudiyam (Peddamudiyam) in the year 1551 A.D [63] The Nandyāla chiefs, who were famous for their

patronage of Narasimha cult as mentioned above, continued their unshaken faith and ardent devotion to Lord Narasimha of Ahōbilam. An epigraph of 1551 A.D from the Upper Ahōbilam temple state that Nandyāla Timmarajāyya made an endowment of land for feeding the twelve Sri Vaishnavas daily in the shrine of Nammālvār within the temple of Ahōbalēśwara on 'Nidhi' ('Upper Ahobilam')[64], after 'naivēdya' to the Lord.

In the reign of Sadāsiva, certain castes gave gifts to Lord Narasimha for attaining spiritual merit. An inscription of 1552 A.D. records the gift of 'Dommaripannu' (Tax on acrobats) to the God Narasinganātha on the tank-bund of Mōtakaṭla in Cuḍḍapah District.[65]

We have a number of grants made to the temples of Lakshmī Narasimha, by the Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara of King Sadāśiva. An inscription of 1553 A.D. records a gift of land by Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Rāmarāju Kōnēti China-Tirumaladēva Mahāraju, to God Narasimha of Pennahōbilam.[66] In the same year, another Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara, Apratikamalla Kuruchēṭi Venkatādridēva Mahārāju made an endowment in cash for providing the 'Naivēdya' to God on the 'Nidhi' i.e., (Upper Ahōbilam), when seated in the sixteen pillared *'Maṇḍapa'* built by him.[67] Besides, in the year 1554 A.D. Mahāmandalēśwara Jiḷḷēḷa Vengalayyadēva Mahārāja re-endowed the village of Narasimhapura to the temple of Lakshmi Narasimha of Nāgarakaḷḷu.[68]

Declaration of remission of certain taxes in the temple before the God was in practice during the reign of king Sadāsiva. An inscription of 1556 A.D. records that Kondupa Dēva Mahā Arasu,

son of Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Rāma Rāju Appayadēva Mahā Araśu, exempted the Mahājans of certain 'Agrahāras' from certain taxes The gift was made in the presence of the God Narasimha Swamy of Henne Ahōbala (Pennahōbilam) on the bank of the river Pināki.[69]

Grants were also made in the reign of King Sadāśiva for the perpetual maintenance of the temples and conducting the Utsavas on specified occasions for the enjoyment of the Lord Gaurayya Nāgayya made provision for conducting the *Pāruvēta utsavas* (hunting festival) of Sri Narasimha at Peddamudiyam in 1557 A.D.[70], in Cuddapah District. In 1558 A.D Emberumānār Jīyyamgāru, the *mudrakarta* of Vaṇ Śathagōpa Jīyyam Gāru and others made the grant of the land for conducting certain festivals, when God Ahōbalēśwara was seated in the 16 pillared 'maṇḍapa' at the Nagari. (Hill)[71] The subordinates of the Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara also shared in the contribution and patronage of the temples An inscription of 1559 A.D., records the provision made for the food offerings of the God Penna-Ahōbhalēśwara by a subordinate of the Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Rāmarāju Tirumala Rājayyadēva Mahārāju.[72] In the year 1560 A D. Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Gōburi Allubhala Rājayya made a gift of some plots of land for the service of God Ahabala Narasimha at Būdūru [73] In the same year, Gōpināthārāju, grand son of the Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Bhatraju of Jūṭūru, made a provision for the offering to the God Ahōbalēśwara when seated in the four pillared *'maṇḍapa'* in the lower Ahōbilam.[74] Another such a grant was made by Tirumalarāju, an officer of King Sadāsiva, in the year 1561 A.D. for providing worship and offerings to god Ahōbalēśwara.[75] There are five grants of lands made to the two temples of Ahōbilam in 1563 A.D.[76]

The battle of Tāḷikōṭa of 1565 A.D was a disastrous blow to the Vijayanagara Kingdom as the victorious army marched into the capital city looting houses and shops [77] The city of Vijayanagara never recovered from the fatal blow.[78] Due to the battle of Tāḷikōṭa, we do not come across inscriptions registering any grants from 1564 A.D. to 1584 A.D During the reign of King Sadāśiva from 1542 to 1564 A.D. there are a number of grants made to the temples of Narasimha. His reign was favourable for the growth and popularity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

Āravīdu Dynasty :

There is an interesting epigraph of 1584 A.D of the reign of Sri Ranga - I[79] This record mentions in unmistakable terms that the temple of Ahōbilam was sacked in 1579 A.D by Ibrahim (Ibrahim Qutub Shah) in alliance with the Hande chiefs of Anantapur who held it for a short time of six years [80] The inscription of 1584 A.D from the Lower Ahōbilam temple gives an account of how Rangarayādēva of Vijayanagara defeated the vandals and restored the prosperity of the place[81] During the region of Veṅkatarāya -II, the temple again became a popular centre of worship. It is attested by an inscription of 1586 A.D. from the temple, which states that Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Veṅkaṭarāju Dēva Chōḍa Mahārāja granted ' eighty ' Varahas ' to the temple for maintenance of certain services in the Ahōbila temple.[82] In this period, the fallen fabric of the rich temple was restored to the former glory renewing the pōpularity of Narasimha cult. Grants were made at this time to the temples of Narasimha by private persons in their devōtion to the lōrd. An inscription of 1590 A.D. records a gift of land for offerings to God

Prahalāda Varada (Narasimha) at Diguva Tirupati (Lower Ahōbilam) by certain Savaram Raṅgappa rāju of Mallappa Chintakuṇṭa[83]. The chiefs also granted lands and villages with a sense of devotion to the Lord. An inscription of the16th Century A.D. states that the Vennupāla Sūrananēḍu granted the village of Ainampūḍi to God Narasimhanatha of korlimarla for *'amṛuta - paḍi'* offerings.[84]

The cult of Narasimha countinued to prosper during this period. The last inscription patronising the cult of Narasimha is that of Venkatapatirāya dēva -II dated in 1609 A.D It records a gift of seven gold - gilt pinnacles *(Kalásas)* for the *Gōpura* (the tall tower) of Vīra Narasimha temple at lower Ahōbilam and certain articles to the God by some merchants of Āravīḍu.[85] This flourishing state of affairs did not continue for a long time. After a decade, during the reign of Rāmadēvarāya, the temple of Ahōbilam met with an unhappy incident. In the year 1619 A.D. the Muslims again sacked the Ahōbilam temple and took away the gold plated vāhanas (vehicles of God).[86] The is the last known act of vandalism of the temple by the Muslims. As the Vijayanagar rulers were the staunch devotees of God Vishnu, the cult of Narasimha received a great impetus gaining favour of the general public and grew in popularity and became prominent and attracted the masses to its fold.

Private Grants :

The study of the inscriptions of the Vijayanagara period reveals that private individuals also made grants to the temples of Narasimha. There are nearly fifty grants made to the temples of Nárasimha by private individuals. These range in dates from 1337 A.D. to 1677 A.D None of them mentions the reign of the kings to which they

belonged. However, they clearly mention the name and place of the donor, the donee, and the purpose of the grant. These grants were made on certain important days for the enjoyment of the Lord. These grants show the devotion of the private individuals hailing from different places and the extent of the cult of Narasimha. The earliest private grant at Tirumala in Chittoor district, mentions the provision made for celebration of a festival in the 'Lakshmī Narasimha Maṇḍapa' by one Giridēvappa in 1404 A.D.[87]

In 1429 A.D. one Aḷḷaḍo (Jvāla) Avōbalanna got polished the garuda *staṁbha* in the presence of the God.[88] A provision for daily 'Naivēdya' (food offering) to Narasimha Perumal of Srinivāsapuram (a suburb of Tirupati) was made in 1450 A.D. In 1469 A.D.[89] one Kandāḍai, Rāmanujayyanagār made provision for offerings to Sri Aḷagiya Śingar (Sri Narasimha Swamy) of Tirumala.[90] In 1493 A.D one Tammayyan provided for offerings to Aḷagiya Śingar enshrined within the temple of Sri Venkatēswara at Tirumala in Chittoor District.[91]

There are nearly fifteen grants made to the temples by private individuals in the 16th century. The earliest grant of the 16th century states that a certain Dēvāmbika made a gift of land for offerings to God Singēśwara Mahādēva (Narasimha) at Uravakonda in 1503, A.D.[92] in Anantapūr district. A similar provision for offering to Aḷagiya Śingar of Śrinivāsapuram (near Tirupati) was made by one Tippu Setty in 1507 A.D.[93] In 1508 A.D. Dalavāyi Anantayya made an endowment of land for providing *'aṅgaraga bhōgas'* to God Ahōbalēśwara Lakshmī Narasimha Mūrti of Pottipāḍu in Cuḍḍapah district[94]. Grants for ōfferings to the God by private individuals are many. Pappu Setty Ayyan, one of the merchants of

Tirupati, instituted an offering to God Alagiya Singar abiding in Śrīnivāsapuram (suburb of Tirupati) in 1512 A.D.[95] In 1529 A.D a gift was made to the temple of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy at Kadiri (Anantapūr District) by a merchant from Tadipatri.[96] The temple servants or employees had also made certain grants to the temples. Kandāḍai Kumāra Rāmanujayyangar, the manager of gold treasury of Sri Venkateswara of Tirumala, made an arrangement for offering to Aḷagiya Śingar (Narasimha) enshrined in Śrīnivāsapuram (suburb of Tirupati) in 1530 A.D.[97] The gifts made to the temples of Narasimha went on in the 17th century also In the series of grants to the Lord, a private grant was made to God Narasimha of Penukoṇḍa (Anantapūr district) in the year 1636 A.D.[98]

Thus, the cult of Narasimha under the partonāge of different dynasties that ruled over Rāyalaseema from 12th to 17th century A.D. had made a steady beginning of the growth from 12th century onwards and considerable progress was made in 15th century A.D. The cult of Narasimha was pōpular and prosperous in the 16th century and it maintained its status quo in the 17th century. The different dynasties contributed their mite more or less for the nourishment and pōpularity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema during the period under study

Association of God Narasimha with Chenchita

This chapter ends with an interesting account of the association of God Narasimha with a tribal woman Chēnchita, which is a thought-provoking incident in the history of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. One of the aboriginal tribes of the Chēnchus claim that Narasimha is their God, who had married Chēnchita, a girl

belonging to their tribe. It seems that there might be much historical validity in their claim, as Āndhras were mentioned in general along with the tribes in the early Purāṇas, while describing the word 'Āndhras' Aryan invaders first penetrated the jungles of the Deccan, they found them inhabited by black-skinned, small, primitive tribes, who attempted to defend their home-land with all the means at their disposal. The Malids have survived only in small tribes inhabiting the forests of Southern India and the Yānādis in the Nellore district of Āndhra. The most northern group of the Malids are however, the Chēnchus, who inhabit in the Nallamalai Hills in Kurnool district of Rāyalaseema.[99]

Mackenzie, in the local records collected by him, speaks of the Chēnchus as Adi-Chēnchus and Yānādi Chēnchus, the former inhabit in the forest nearby the temple of Narasimha at Ahōbilam and the latter in the forests, near the temples of Bhārgava Narasimha and Pavana Narasimha.[100] There is another category of the Chenchus, who are known as 'Dāsari Chenchus'. They devote their lives in the service of Lord Narasimha of Ahōbilam and they embraced 'Vaiṣnaviam' and became 'dāsas' (servants) to the God.[101]

There are certain legends and traditions which speak of the origin of Chēnchus and the marriage of Chēnchita with God Narasimha. The Chēnchus claim that Chēnchu Lakshmī is their Goddess and they worship God Narasimha, who married her. There is a popular legend which runs as follows:

"Previous to the incarnation of Śri Krishna in the Dwāparayuga, the Chēnchus were shepherds of the Yeṛra Golla caste. Ōbal Ēsvara,

the deity of Ōbalam, a celebrated hill-shrine in the Nallamallas, having taken away and kept as Chēnchita, a maid of the Yerra Golla family, be got upon her children, of whom they are descendants".[102]

There is another legend, which says that God Narasimha of Ahōbilam married a girl of the Chēnchu. The legend runs as follows:

One day, God Narasimha fell in love with one of the most beautiful Chenchu girls. Even though the God Narasimha took her to his house and called her "Chēnchu Lakshmi" and she lived with the god's own wife, who was called "Ādi Lakshmi", she was very unhappy. And she prayed that in future all Chēnchu girls should be as ugly with crooked noses and ugly eyes and black skin, for if they were born beautiful, the Nawābs, and the Sāhibs and even the Gods would take way.[103]

Edgar Thurston mentions a similar tradition of the Chēnchus.

"The Chēnchus are said (Madras census report 1891) like the Yānādis, to worship a God called "Chenchu Dēvata" to whom offerings of honey and fruits made. They believe that God Narasimha of Ahōbilam, whom they call 'Ōbulēsuḍu' carried off a beautiful Chēnchu girl, named "Chēnchita" and married her to prevent the occurrence of a similar fate to other females of the tribes, Chēnchita ordained that they should in future be born ugly and devoid of personal charms. The Chēnchus claim 'Ōbulēsuḍu' as their brother-in-law and when they go to the temples for annual festival, they carry clothes and presents for the God and Goddess [104] Still the Chēnchus claim that God Narasimha of Ahōbilam is their brother-in-law and Chēnchita belongs to their tribe. They enjoy certain privileges even now in the temple of Ahōbilam.

There is another tradition in Sanskrit that if the dwellers of the forest worship God Narasimha, their troubles are minimised and their desires are fulfilled.

"Jale rakṣatu Varāhah, Sthale rakṣatu Vāmanaah,
Atavyam Narasimhascha, Sarvatah patu Kēsavah"
(Stōtra Patham - Oral Tradition)

The tribals believe in a world of invisible power which influence human life. Especially the Chēnchus worship God Narasimha and Goddess Chēnchu Lakshmī even now as their family deities

Now let us see the association God Narasimha with Chēnchita in historical perspective Scott's Fenshta describe, Chenchus as appeared before prince Muhammad Masum, a son of Aurangazeb who passed through the Kurnool District in 1694, as exceedingly black, with long hair and heads covered with leaves of trees Each wears unfared arrows and a bow for hunting. They do no harm to any one and live in caves or under the shade of forest trees.[105]

In the temples at Ahōbilam (Kurnool district) and Peddamuḍiyam (Cuḍḍapah district), we have a sculptural representation of God Narasimha and Chenchita episode There is a sculpture of Narasimha and Chēnchita on one of the four central pillars of mukhamaṇḍapa of upper Ahōbilam temple, supposed to have been built by Hari Hara-II of Vijayanagara in 1395 A.D [106] As such the concept of Chēnchita and Narasimha goes back to 1395 A.D. A similar sculputure can be observed on a pillar in the Ugra Narasimha swamy temple at Peddamuḍiyam in Cuḍḍapah district. Another similar sculpture of Narasimha and Chēnchita is

found on a pillar in the Rangamaṇḍapa of the Narasimha temple at lower Ahōbilam. This sculpture belongs to the Vijayanagara period on stylistic grounds Thus, the motif of Chēnchu Lakshmī and Narasimha had been popular in Rāyalaseema from the 14th century onwards.

In addition to the sculptural evidence of concept of Chēnchita and Narasimha, there is also a literary work belonging to the later part of the 16th century A.D. which supports the popular concept. The event of the marriage of God Narasimha with a Chēnchu woman of the Nallamalai forest, is the theme of the Sanskrit drama, named "Vāsantika Parinayam", written by Vaṇ Śaṭha gōpa jīyyangār, the seventh pontiff of Ahōbila math. He appealed to the king Rangarāyadēva (1578-1587 A.D.) of Vijayanagara, at Penukonda, to restore the temple of Ahōbilam to its original glory by driving away the Muslim army from there [107] It is probable that this Jīyyangar, the seventh head of Ahōbila math, might have written this Sanskrit drama, to bring back the fallen fabric of the temple and infuse the hearts of the devotees with renewed devotion with vigour.

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SELECT CENTRES OF WORSHIP OF NARASIMHA IN RĀYALASEEMA

There are eighty eight centres of Narasimha worship in Rāyalaseema, testifying the pōpularity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. There was steady growth in the number of temples and their organisation in Rāyalaseema from 12th century onwards. The centres of Narasimha worship of historical significance in Rāyalaseema can be listed with the help of inscriptions There are forty four centres referred to in the inscriptions, but many of the centres are not in existence today. In this chapter, six famous centres of Narasimha worship in Rāyalaseema are taken up for study. They are arranged, district-wise, in chronolōgical order as given below.

The following are the important extant centres of Narasimha worship in Rāyalaseema.

S.No.	Name of the Centre	Earliest inscription in A.D.	Taluk & District
1.	Ahōbilam	1335 A.D. Kurnool Dist.	Āḷḷagaḍḍa Tq.,
2.	Kadiri	1352 A.D	Kadiri Tq., Anantapūr Dist
3.	Gutti (Gooty)	14th C.A.D.	Gutti Tq., Anantapūr Dist.
4.	Pennahōbilam	1553 A.D.	Uravakoṇḍa Tq. Anantapūr Dist.
5.	Tirumala	1404 A D	Chandragiri Tq., Chittoor Dist
6.	Peddamuḍiyam	1551 A D	Jammalamaḍugu Tq., Cuḍḍapah Dist

The above six centres of Narasimha worship falling within the time limit of 12th century A.D. to the 17th century A.D. continue to be the centres of worship even to this day.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and sketch the general significance of the six Narasimha kshētras in Rāyalaseema of Āndhra Pradēsh. Apart from the above stated six centres, a brief account of minor temples of Narasimha is also given in the sequel

1. Kurnool District

In the whole Rāyalaseema region, Kurnōol district stands first in the pōpularity of the cult of Narasimha with several temples of historic and religious significance, the chief of them being the Ahōbilam temple, a great pilgrim centre for Hindus, especially the Srivaishnavites. It is a leading light of the Narasimha cult Let us make a detailed study of the temples of Narasimha, in order of importance from the points of view of legends and traditions, inscriptions, rituals and sculptures.

The Temples of Ahobilam :

Ahōbilam, the famous pilgrimage centre for the Srivaishnavites, is about 24 kms from Āḷḷagadda, the Taluk headquarters and 68 kms. from Nandyāl Railway station It is also known as 'Nava Narasimha Kshētra' or 'Śingavēl Kunram' in Tamil. The unique feature of Ahōbilam is that it is the only Narasimha temple where all the nine forms of Lord Narasimha are worshipped with great reverence. The temples of Ahōbilam can be conveniently divided in to the North and the South wings or the Lower and the Upper Ahōbilam The temple of Prahlāda Varada or Narasimha in his

graceful mood to the boy - devotee Prahlāda is located in Lower Ahōbilam, also known as Chinna Ahōbilam or Diguva Tirupati in Telugu. A distance of eight kms, from this temple leads to the Upper Ahōbilam on an altitude of 2800 feet M.S.L. The inscriptions refer to it as 'Nidri' [1] or 'Nagiri' [2] but the Telugu local names are 'Eguva Tirupati and Pēdda Ahōbilam The deity of the Upper Ahōbilam is called Ahōbalēsvara.[3] The legendary importance is that the God had manifested himself in a natural cavern of the rock and is one of the 108 *'Divya Tīrthas'* (Holy places) in India. According to mythology, the range of Nallamalai hills from Kurnool district to Chittoor district is a personification of Ādisēsha, the Serpent bed of Lord Vishnu, whose tail end is Śrīsailam, whose middle is Ahōbilam and whose head is Tirupati [4]

The Temples in Inscriptions and Literature :

There are about thirty inscriptions in the two temples of Ahōbilam Besides, there are about seventeen literary works that make references to Ahōbilam temples, mostly by poēts of the 'Prabandha age' Out of the seventēen, two are in Sanskrit, namely *Rāmābhyudayam* and *Vāsantika Parinayam* and one in Tamil, *Peria Tirumozhi*. The rest are Telugu Prabandha Kāvyas, Purāṇas, Śatakams and Yakshagaṇas, all done by Telugu scholars and poets of exceptional merit.

The history of the temples of Ahōbilam can be gleaned from the following inscriptions.

Tabular Statement of Inscriptions of Ahobilam

No.	Year A.D.	Donor	Purpose
1.	1335	Koṇḍavīḍu Reddy King Vēma	Construction of steps in upper Ahōbilam [5]
2.	1378	Reddy King Anavēma	Building of steps besides to the earlier steps. [6]
3.	1410	Katama Reddy	Gift of Kamāragirpuram for daily offerings to Ahōbaladēvara[7]
4.	1546	Son of Bhūtanātha Bramha Jyōtiṣa	for daily offerings to the deity of Lower Ahōbilam (Private grant)[8]
5.	1547	Uggarasayya of Guḍiya chēlūru	Offerings to God Vīra Narasimha during festivals. [9]
6.	1548	Narasamma, wife of Gouri Vobaya	Vasanta Mandapa to the north of Lower Ahōbilam.[10]
7	1574	Appaiah	Daily homage to Sri Ahōbilēśwara[11]
8.	undated	Sarvadēva Sōmayājulu of pērūr	Sidhārthi year Kashirābdhi Nava Narasimha Maṇḍapa (Upper Ahōbilam) [12]
9.	do	Sadāśiva of Vijaya nagar	Grant of Nālūru village in Podilisīma for offering to god when seated in the Maṇḍapa.[13]

10	do	Basayya of Goldsmith	Gift of Hanumanta image.[14]
11	do	Sūrappa ōbalayya dēva Mahārāja. Number 8 to 11 Lower Ahobilam	Pramādītha year — lower Ahōbilam Garuda Stambha opposite to temple, money deposit in temple Treasury for offering on 220 festival days in procession occasions.[15]
12	undated	-	List of their for dishes to Sri Bhāshyākāra (Rāmānuja) on 12 days (Tiru Nakshatram)[16]
13.	do	Bhuravatu servant of Aliyarāmarāya	Homage to the god (shrine of Jvāla Narasimha)[17]
14	do	Narasimha Jiyyan gāru	Mandapa to Jvāla Narasimha.[18]
15.	do	Ramana Rāya Nāyudu	Krōdhi year - gift of Garuda Stambha to deity.[19]
16.	do	Kōnēti Vōbulayya gāru Numbers 12 to 16 Ahōbilam.	Gift of village Kalluptla for offering to god when seated in Mandapa in Lower Ahobilam. Twice Naivēdya, midday and evening to the Lord as well as Sri Bhāshyakāra.[20]

Mythology and Legend of the Ahōbilam temple :

The Sthalapurāna of the temple is narrated as part of the Bramhāndapurāṇa with ten chapters in 1046 slōkas by Maharshi Vēda Vyāsa.[21] The greatness of Ahobilam as described in the Sthalapurāna is given below This sacred place was the kingdom of Hiraṇyakaśipu in Kritayuga and Lord Narasimha came out of the pillar in the palace of the demon king This place was called Vēdāchalam, Garudāchalam and Vīrakshētram.[22] It is also known as Śingavēlkundram. There are two pōpular legends for the derivātion of the word Ahōbilam. According to the first legend, the Dēvas while witnessing the terrific aspect (Ugra Kāla) taken by the deity to tear Hiraṇyakaśipu to pieces, sang His praise as Ahōbala (Lo! The Strength)[23] Hence the place came to be known as Ahōbalam A prapathi sloka attests to this fact

"Ahōvīryam Ahōsauryam
Ahōbāhu Parākramah
Narashimham Param Daivam
Ahōbilam Ahōbalam"

According to another version, Garuda worshipped and realised the Lord in the great cave Ahōbala [24] and the place came to be called Ahōbila.

It is stated that Bramhadēva, Lord Śri Rāma and Lord Śrinivāsa of the Seven Hills also worshipped Lord Narasimha. [25] In Tamil Vaishnava tradition, [26] the God is known as 'Peria Perumāḷ' It is also stated that Rāma while living in the forest prayed to Narasimha with 'Pānchāmrita Stōtra'.[27] It is also said that Lord

Srinivasa prayed to Sri Narasimha of Ahōbilam before marrying Padmāvati [28]

The Sthalapurāṇa of Ahōbilam in Sanskrit gives an account of nine forms (Nava Narasimhas) of Narasimha worshipped here. They are as follows

1. Bhārgava Narasimha

The temple of Bhārgava Narasimha is at a distance of 2 kms from the Lower Ahōbilam, on a hill near the sacred pond known as 'Bhārgava Tīrtham'. Here Bhārgava Rāma is said to have performed penance. Hence, the Lord of the temple is known as Bhārgava Narasimha.

2. Yōgānanda Narasimha

This temple is at a distance of 2 ½ kms to the south east of Lower Ahōbilam The popular legend is that after killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, Lord Narasimha taught Prahlāda several Yogic postures Hence, the God in this aspect is called Yōgānanda Narasimha.

3. Chatravaṭa Narasimha

This image of Narasimha is situated at a distance of 3 kms from Lower Ahōbilam, under a pipal tree, surrounded by thorny bushes. Therefore, the God is called Chatravaṭa Narasimha

4. Ahōbila Narasimha

This is the main temple and the earliest of all the nine shrines at the place. It is situated on the Upper Ahōbilam at a distance of 8 kms. from the Lower Ahōbilam. The God in this temple appears in his fierce aspect called Ugra Narasimha, the presiding deity of the

temple and he is known as Ahōbila Nṛsimhaśwāmy. It is firmly believed that Lord Narasimha was Svayaṁbhu (self-manifest) here.

5.Krōḍakāra (Varāha) Narasimha

About 1 km. from the main temple is the temple of Krōḍākāra Narasimha. The image of the deity has the face of a boar (Varāha or Krōḍa) and the God is seen along with his consort Lakshmi

6. Kāranja Narasimha

This shrine is at a distance of 1 km from the Upper Ahōbilam and one furlong from the road leading to Lower Ahōbilam. The image of the deity is installed under a tree called Kāraṅja Vṛiksham Therefore, this image is called Kāraṅja Narasimha.

7. Mālōla Narasimha

This shrine is situated at a distance of 2 kms. from the main temple of Upper Ahōbilam. The deity in this shrine is in Sowmya (graceful) form. As Lord Narasimha is shown with his consort Lakshim, he is called 'Mālōla Narasimha'

8. Jvālā Narasimha

This shrine is on a higher up of the Mālōla Narasimha shrine, on a hill called 'Achalachchaya Mēru' which is about 4 kms. from the Upper Ahōbilam temple This place is said to be the actual spot where the fierce anger of the Lord reached its culmination when he tore Hiraṇyakaśipu.

9. Pāvana Narasimha

This shrine is nearby the above temple on the bank of the river, Pāvana and it is about 6 kms. from the Upper Ahōbilam temple.

Apart from the above stated nine shrines of Narasimha, there is a famous shrine dedicated to God in the Lower Ahōbilam and it is popularly known as 'Prahlāda Varada Sannidhi.'

The other attractions of this place are 'Ugra Sthambham' and 'Prahlāda Meṭtu'.

The Sanskrit slōka on Navanarasimhas

"Jvālāhōbila Mālōla
Krōdākārañja Bhārgavah
Yōgānanda Chatravata
Pāvana Navamūrthayē"

is found in the Tāllapaka works (Kīrthana No. 453). In a Saṅkīrtana, Tāllapaka Annamayya describes the Nava Narasimhas as follows.

'Nava Narasimha Namō Nama
Bhāgavah theera Ahōbila Narasimha
Satata Prātapa Rudra Jvālā Narasimha
Vitata Vīra Simha Vidārana
Atisaya Karuna Yōganānda Narasimha
Mathisaritapu Kanugamanu Narasimha
Mārāli Bībhatsapu Matte Malla Narasimha
Narahari Bhargoti Narasimha
Paripūrṇa Śrīngāra Prahlāda Narasimha
Śirula Nadbhutapu Lakshmī Narasimha
Vadana Bhayānakapu Varāha Narasimha
Chēdarani Vaibhavāla Sri Narasimha
Adana Sri Vēnkatēsa Andu Vividu Vīravaithi
Padhivēla Rūpamula Bāhu Narasimha - ' - "Nava".

There is a popular legend about Lord Narasimha which is widely current among the Chēnchus, who are associated with Ahōbilam. The pōpular legend is that "when Vishnu took on the incārnation of Narasimha, goddess Lakshmī was born in the Chēnchu

Tribe and both were living here happily. On account of this, the god refused to go back to Vaikuntham also. The love of Lord Narasimha with Chenchita, a tribal woman is famous in many folk songs of the place" The sculptures of Narasimha and Chēnchita on the pillars of the temples of Prahlāda Varada at Lower Ahōbilam and of Ahōbila Narasimha of Upper Ahōbilam and the Sanskrit Drama 'Vāsantika Parinayam' lend support to the popular legend of Narasimha and Chēnchita.[29]

The Temple in Tradition

The temple tradition is that it has been visited by some famous kings and prēachers. The 'Guru Paramparā' states that the great Sri Vaishnava preacher, Śrīmad Rāmānujāchārya of 11th century visited the temple.[30] The great Western Chalukya king Vikramāditya is said to have worshipped the 'Mūla vigraha' of this temple.[31] The Ahōbilam Kaifiyat records that, Pratāparudra, the Kākatīya king, made a gift of the idols, renōvated the maṇḍapas and arranged for the conduct of the 'Utsavas' in the temple of Ahōbala.[32] One tradition says that when Pratāparudra wanted to cast a gold Śiva Linga on return from Śrīsailam, the figure of Narasimha only emerged and he was directed to worship of the Lord of Ahōbilam in his dream. The king had endowed lands for the maintenance of temple and rituals and also gifted valuable ornaments to the Lord [33] It is stated that Prōlaya Vēma Reddy (1324 - 1353 A.D), the founder of the Reddi Kingdom of Kondavīḍu, is said to have built a *kalyānamaṇḍapa* with 64 pillars, rich in ārchitecture.[34] According to the tradition, Chaitanya (Gaurayaswamy) visited the shrine of Narasimha at Ahōbilam in 1513 A.D.[35]

History of The Ahōbila Maṭh

After the death of the great Vaishnava scholar Vēdānta Dēśika in 1370 A.D., the mantle of the Āchārya fell on his son, Varada Āchārya. Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakōpa Yatīndra Mahādēśika was the founder of the Ahōbila Math. One Śrīnivasa Āchārya, a great scholar was directed by the Lord, to came to Ahōbilam. The Lord initiated him with 'Presha Mantra' and bestōwed ' Sanyasa Āshrama' on him and named him as 'Satha Kōpa Jīyar'.[36] He was also directed to take out the Utsava idol from temple to temple to all parts of India. In a trance, the Sanyāsi got the Mālōla Narasimha Swamy Utsava Mūrti which was carried by him from place to place in his religious tour on foot. The king arranged for daily 'Ārādanas' at the Ahōbilam temple. Since that time, the temple is under the management of Ahōbila Math.[37] The founder of the math made visit to Orissa, on the Tirumala Hill, he established Vaṇ Śathakōpa Maṭh.[38] He also established a chain of monasteries.[39]

The Ahōbilam math was the great nerve - centre of Śrīvaishnavism in Rāyalaseema. 'Sathakōpa Jīyar was the fifth pontiff of the Math and also spiritual preceptor of Nandyāla chiefs.[40] The 1555 A.D. epigraph mentions that Sāshṭa Parānkuśa was the trustee of the Ahōbila temple. The Āchārya authored many a work including Narasimhōstava. The tradition concludes with the disappearance of the Āchārya in the cave of Ahōbilam temple and also for his drāma 'Vāsanṭika Parinṇayam'.[41] The thēme of the drāma is the marriage of God Narasimha with a woman of Chēnchu tribe.

The Temples of Ahōbilam

There are two important temples at Ahōbilam, viz., (1) Prahlāda Varada Swamy in the Lower Ahōbilam and (2) Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy on the Upper Ahōbilam which is earlier than the first one.

(1) The Temple of Prahlāda Varada of Lower Ahōbilam

The Lower Ahōbilam temple has three prākāras. The presiding deity is called 'Prahlāda Varada Swamy' In the courtyard of the temple there is a shrine dedicated to Sri Venkateswara to the south west and the mukhamaṇḍapa is being used as the kalyāṇamaṇḍapa for the deity. The temple consists of a sanctum, mukhamaṇḍapa and raṅgamaṇḍapa with rich sculptures on the pillars. To the left of the principal deity, the 'Utsava' (processional) idols of Pāvana Narasimha are installed. A small copper idol of the Jīyar, the founder of the Ahōbila Maṭh is kept before the Utsava idols.

(2) The Temple of Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy of Upper Ahōbilam

The Upper Ahōbilam temple is dedicated to Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy. The Lord is said to be 'Svayaṁbhu' (self-manifest) in a rock cavern. The temple consist of the sanctum (in cavern shape) and the shrines of Śiva and Narasimha, Sudarśana and of Chēnchu Lakshmī [42] The maṇḍapas of the temple display rich art and architecture.

A small river, 'Bhavanāśini' flows to the east of the temple. There are the idols of the Chēnchu women, Chenchita and Lakshmī in different places. The Utaṣava idols of the temple are installed in the Lower Ahōbilam temple. The Dhruvabēra of the temple is popularly known as 'Ahōbala Narasimha Swamy'.

Impact of Ahōbilam

The extent of influence of Ahōbilam may be assessed from that it spread to other parts of Rāyalaseema from 12th century A.D. onwards An inscription of 1124 A.D from Peddamuḍiyam in Cuḍḍapah district refers to a grant of village Mudivēmu to the Mahājanas of that place in the presence of God Narasimha of that place In the same district, we have two inscriptions from Koṇḍa Sunkēsula in 14th C A D. An inscription of 1342 A D from the temple of Narasimha, mentions the God of that place as Ahōbalanāṭha dēvara [43] and another record of 1334 A.D from the same place, records a gift to God Ahōbala Narasimha.[44] Of the same century in the same district, two inscriptions of 1350 [45] and 1369 A.D.[46] refer to God as Avubala dev ara and Ahōbala dēvara of Vōnūtula and Vōgunūtula villages respectively. It can be seen from an inscription of 1352 A.D from the temple of Narasimha at Kadiri in Anantapūr district, that the God of that place was known as Aubaladēvara.[47] Thus, we find the name of Ahōbala to the deity in Cuḍḍapah and Anantapūr districts, after the name of the God of Ahōbilam in Kurnool district from 12th century A.D. Since then, a number of persons bear the name of Ahobala after the God of Ahōbilam.

Minor Temples of Narasimha in Kurnool District

Besides the temples of Ahōbilam, there are a few minor temples of Narasimha in Kurnool district testifying the prevalence of the cult of Narasimha in this part of Rāyalaseema. The minor shrines of Narasimha are found in the following places of Kurnool district.

1.	Annasamudram	9.	Yādavavāda
2	Muṇḍlapāḍu	10.	Kunukuṇṭla
3	Raṅgāpuram	11	Rāmatīrtham
4.	Narasāpuram	12	Uppalapāḍu
5.	Timmanayānipalle	13.	Kolimiguṇḍla
6.	Ālamūru	14.	Sarvēpalle
7.	Būdūru	15.	Peddajambulam
8.	R. Krishṇāpuram	16.	Chinna Jambulam

Of the above stated sixteen minor centres of Narasimha worship, a brief account of six places is given here.

1. The Lakshmī Narasimhaswamy Temple at Annasamudram

It is about 30 miles from Mārkapur town on the way to Vinukoṇḍa, and has the Narasimha shrine on a hill. A hill stream 'Koṇḍalam' washes the foot of the hill. The image of the deity at this place is 3 feet high with a lion's head.

2. Muṇḍlapāḍu

This place is about 69 kms from Giddalūru on the Giddalūru -Cuḍḍapah road, originally known as 'Munula Puri' (the place of sages) under the rule of the pālegārs. The chief temple is that of Bhavāni Śaṅkara Swāmy with the image of Narasimha.

3. Raṅgāpuram

This village is about 4 miles from Raṅgāpuram railway station. The deity in this place is called 'Maḍḍulēṭi Swāmy'. According to a local legend, the god fulfilled the desire of His woman-devotee, Chinnamma to appear there as Maḍḍuleti Narasimha Swamy and stay till the end of Kaliyuga to fulfil the desires of all his devotees.

Belief goes that if the offered flowers slide down the deity, their wishes are negatived.

4. Narasāpuram

The Narasimha Swamy temple of this place is located at a distance of 8 miles from Ahōbilam and 5 miles from Āḷḷagaḍḍa. The historical aspect of the place is that it was visited by the Kākatīya king Pratāpa Rudra in one of his hunting expeditions, and was selected for the construction of Narasimha temple.

5. Thimmanāyanipalle

This is a hamlet of Narasāpuram, about 7 miles from Āḷḷagaḍḍa. It is learnt that Thimmarusu, the Mahāmaṭri of Sri Krishna Dēvarāya, while returning to Vijayanagara after his hunting expedition in Nallamala forest, visited the Ahōbilam temple. To thank the villagers who quenched his thirst with the sweet water of the Palmyra fruit in the hot Sun, he agrēed to contribute the expenditure for the construction of the Narasimha temple at this village from the royal treasury. The villagers named the village after the name of the Prime Minister. The Pāruvēṭa Utsavam (Hunting Festival) of Narasimha Swamy is a very ancient festival here commemorating the marriage of Lord Narasimha with Chēnchu Lakshmī.

6. Ālamūru

The temple of Ālamūru is about 6 miles form Āḷḷagaḍḍa. It has a bronze image of Sri Narasimha Swamy. In addition to the six minor temples mentioned above, there are also a few minor shrines of Narasimha at palces like Krishnāpuram, Yādavavāda, Kunukuṇṭala and Uppalapāḍu, all in Kurnool district of Rāyalaseema. Information regarding these places is scanty

2. Anantapūr District:

1. The Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy Temple, Kadiri.

Kadiri is a municipal town, about 89 kms from the District headquarters of Anantapūr on the Pākāla - Dharmavaram metre gauge section of South Central Railway Kadiri comes only next to Ahōbilam in the line of Narasimha temples. A lot of material, both literary and archaeological is available to facilitate the study of the temple. The name of the town can be traced in the three ways. Firstly it can be split into two words, 'Kha' meaning 'the foot of Vishnu' and 'Adri' meaning a 'Hill' It thus means a place with a hill representing the feet of Vishnu. The second meaning is 'Khadri' is a type of wood of which the deity is made So goes the name of the town also. Thirdly, the place was a Jungle full of "Khadira" trees (Acacia Catchedu), under which the idol of the deity is said to have been originally found

The History of the Temple :

The history of the temple can be known from about 15 inscriptions which range in dates from 1352 A D. to 1529 A.D These inscriptions, the Sthalapurāna of the temple, other literary works, legends and traditions give information about the history of the temple. The earliest inscription is of 1352 A.D. It mentions that during the reign of Bukkanaoḍeya, Pandima Sannāyiu Chelmāyaka completed the construction of the mandapa of the temple, then known as Aubhaladēva temple[48] The Rāyas of Vijayanagara greatly patronised the temple Bukka Rāya - I was a devotee of god Narasimha.

The second inscription of 1353 A.D.[49] records the gift of an ornament to the God by one Gōpana, an officer of Kumāra II,son of Bukka Deva-I.[50] The other record of Bukka dated 1367 A.D [51] states that Kammi Nāyuḍu made a grant of one *putti* of land for food offerings to god Ahōbaladēva of Kadiri. There are two inscriptions of the reign of Dēvarāya - I, dated in 1418 A.D. The first inscription confirms the exemption granted to the Pāñchalās by king Harihara from certain taxes.[52]

The second inscription states that the king sitting in the mukhamandapa of the temple, made an enquiry in a dispute between the Mālas, Mādigas and the Ryots and took a decision [53]

An inscription of 1458 A.D [54] records the gift of land to the *Rāmānujakūtam* in the temple, while another of 1469 A.D. [55] records the gift of a pillar, during the reigns of Mallikārjuna Raya (1447-1465 A.D) and Virūpāksha Rāya II (1465-1485 A.D) respectively

The reign of Sri Krishna Dēvarāya is an epoch making one in the history of the temples of Rāyalaseema He patronised a number of temples An inscription of 1512 A.D [56] from Uppaḍihaḷḷi, states that one Ellayya, a servant of Krishnadēvarāya, made a gift of the Uppaḍihalli village for the service of Ahōbala Narasimh Another inscription of 1529 A.D records a gift of land to the God Narasimha of Kadiri by Venkaṭanāyudu, a relation of the king, for worship and offering to the God.[57]

There are some undated records also which furnish information about the temple. One record registers the building of a *gōpura* [58] by a certain Viṭhalāmātya. Another inscription at the foot

of Narasimha koṇḍa, east of Kadiri, records the gift of garden in the Telugu year Sarvadhari [59]

Inscriptions of 1356 A.D 1384 A.D and 1579 A.D are found in the temple of Narasimha at Kadiri. These are not published in the epigraphic works An inscription of 1356 A.D states that the Kokkaṇṭi Pālēgār did the construction of the western *gōpura* of the temple. Similarly the inscription of 1384 A.D says that a women devotee, Chinnamma by name constructed the nothern *gōpura*. The constructions of the eastern *gōpura* is referred to in an inscription of Harihara rāya. During his travel from Penugonda to Chandragiri, he introduced Harijan entry into the temple for a single day, next to the Brahmōtsavam celebration [60] The construction of the Vasantōsava - maṇḍapam by the palegar of Tāḍipatri is referred to in the inscription of 1529 A.D In 1579 A.D., Koṇḍamanāyudu, pālegar of Paṭnam, gifted a *Shrōtriyam* village to the temple called after his name as Koṇḍamanāyanipālem

The Temple in Legends and Literature :

The sanctity and greatness of the Lakshmi Narasimha temple are vividly described in *Khadri Sthalapurānam* which was published by the temple authorities. It contains 767 Slōkas and divided into 13 chapters, giving fuller details of the temple.[61] It is said that God Narasimha with his sharp claws, tore the belly of HiranyaKaśipa at Narasimhakoṇḍa and manifested Himself in the present town. The legend further says that 'Utsavamūrthis' were delivered by Lord Narasimha Himself to Bhrigu Maharshi in a "Peṭika" (Box) for his daily worship. The Sthalapurānam refers to the God by the name of 'Vasanta Vallabhulu. or Vasantha Mādhavulu'.[62]

According to another legend, sage Vēdavyāsa, without the knowledge of the Aśuras, impārted lessons to disciples and the place called Kēdaraṇyam, Anohter version is that the local hill called Stōtrādri is the palce where the Dēvas worshipped the 'God' after he killed the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu.[63]

The Literary Base of the Temple

The Tāllapāka singer - poets[64] (1408-1547 A.D.) sang the glory of Kadiri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy temple as one of the 'NAVA NARASIMHA KSHĒTRAS'[65] Their composition is as follows:

"Nava Mūrthy Lanaṭṭi Narasimhamu Veede
Nava Maina Sri Kadiri Narasimhamu."

It is also said that 'Kshētrayya', (1600-1680 A.D.) another signer poet paid a visit to the Kadiri shrine.

The Temple Complex :

The temple of Kadiri, popular called 'Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy' is situated inside a 500sq feet high walled compound with four entrances with a *gōpura* on each them. The main entrance is in the east. On the axis, the temple consists of a *Sanctum (Garbha griha), aṅtarāḷa, mukhamaṇḍapa* connecting *maṇḍapa and mahāmaṇḍapa.* Within the temple, there are small shrines of uts idols, Lakshmī, Nammāḷvār, Rāmānuja and Vēndānta Dēśika. There is also a small shrine to Hanuman in the compound The presiding deity of the temple is 'Vidārana Narasimha' The sanctum houses the metal images of Narasimha Swamy and Lakshmī. The processional images of the temple are housed in a separate room of the temple. The Lakshimī Narasimhaswamy temple of Kadiri is a

good specimen of the early Vijayanagara architecture, about 14th century A.D

2. The Temple of Lakshmī Narasimha at Gutti:

Gutty or Gooty is 51 kms from Anantapūr and 29 kms from Guntakal. The temple of Narasimha is located on a hill with a fort[66] which is in ruins. The temple and the tank below were constructed by king Bukka (1344-1377A.D) as per the directions of the God Narasimha who appeared in a dream to the King. 'Gooty' is the English corrupt from of 'Gutti' [67], the Indian name of the fort and village. We have no foundation inscription about the exact date of construction of the temple.

The History of the temple stārts from the 14th century A.D. [68] On a rock near the temple is an inscription of 14th century in Kannaḍa language, which praises the glory of Lakshmī Narasimha. From the rock inscription, found at the fort of Gutti, it is known that the fort (Gutti durga) belonged to king Bukka.[69] (1344-77 A.D.)

The temple of Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy is located on a lower fringe of the hill, and consists of a *sanctum sanctorum, antarāḷa and mukhamaṇḍapa*. The image of the deity bears the usual form found in other places, and it was consecrated by king Bukkarāya of Vijayanagara who had a fancy for building works on hills in the empire.

1. The Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy at Penna Ahobilam :

The Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy temple of Penna Ahōbilam is located at a distance of about 12kms to the east of Uravakonda and 40kms from Anantapūr. The temple is on the top of hillock 1360 ft. above the sea level. It can be reached by the flight of steps.

It is said that the Lord has set one foot here in his travel round the earth after killing Hiranyakaśipu at Ahōbilam.[70] According to a legend, at the southern end of the foot-print, there is a cave-like hollow point in which sage Uddālaka did penance.[71] Hence the name Pennahobilam, also known as Henna - Ahōbila or Pinnahōbilam (Chinna Ahōbilam).

Inscriptions :

The history of the temple dates back to the second half of the 16th century A.D. Thre are three inscriptions of the reign of Sadāśivarāya of Vijayanagara in the temple. The earliest record is of 1553 A.D It records a gift of land by Mahāmandalēśwara Rāmarāju Kōnēti Chinna Tirumala Dēva Mahārāju.[72] The second record of 1556 A.D. records the remission of taxes on certain Agrahāram villages lying in the Uravakondasīma.[73] The third record of 1559 A.D. mentions the provision made for food offerings to the God Pennahubhalēśwara by a subōrdinate of the king.[74] Besides, there are two undated epigraphs. The first of them records the construction of 'Thediddi Bagalu' (narrow gateway) on the South by one Jōgināyaka and the other states that one Venkaṭādri Nāyaka paid respects to the God[75].

The Temple in Legends and Traditions :

There is a popular legend relating to the foundation of the temple. A cowherd boy revealed to his master at Goḷḷapalli at the foot of the temple that master,s cow did not yield milk. One night the Lord told the ryot in his dream that He resided in an out-hill on the hillock and that the cow was fēeding him with her milk. As per the dream, the image of the Lord was traced in an ant-hill and it was

worshipped with great devōtion. As the residents of the village were all cow-herds, the house wives used to get up early in the morning and commence churing. It is said that the churing noise of the house wives brought the wrath of the Lord who cursed the village to go into ruins.[76] Hence there is no village today nearby the temple.

Another legend says that the Lord hunted wild boars in the locality. To satisfy the sage Uddālaka, the Lord set his right foot - print in the temple, while the left - foot - print is at the temple in Ahōbilam of Kurnool District.[77] Still there are the foot-prints of a boar and the Lord at the place. Another legend narrates the marriage of Lord Narasimha with a Chēnchu girl. This marriage is celebrated every year on the Rathasaptami day in the temple, while the Lord's marriage with Mahālakshmī at the base of the hillock is celebrated every year during the Brahmōtsavam festival in the month of *Vaiśākha*

This is a tradition regarding the temple which is popular among the people, but it is lacking historical evidence. It is said that in 900 A.D. Rājarājachōḷa of Chōla dynasty impressed by the locality, constructed a temple over the foot print of the Lord, a big compound and *Dvaja - Stambham*. The tradition further says that the temple constructed by Rājarāja was rebuilt, compound was repaired, four gōpuras were erected on four sides, a road for temple car was laid and the village Pennahōbilam along with 3000 acres of land was assigned to the temple by Āravīṭi Rāmarāju, pōpularly known as Aḷiya Rāmarāju, son - in -law of Sri Krishna Dēva Rāya. Another local tradition is that the temple of Lakshmī Dēvi was built by Sadāsiva Raya of Vijayanagara. This is supported by a sculpture of a man

and women supposed to be king and his Queen at the eastern entrance standing with folded hands facing the Lord. Thus, these legends furnish us some information about the temple of Pennahōbilam its antiquity and pōpularity.

The Temple Complex

The temple of Lakshmī Narasimha is on the hillock. It consits of the Sanctum and *aṅtarāla,* surrounded by a *pradakshina* connecting *maṇḍapa* and *mahāmaṇḍapa.* In the *maṇḍapa* there is a shrine for the 'Āḷvars' facing the south In the courtyard is a small shrine dedicated to Lord Chēnna Kēsava Śwāmy, facing the south. In the south-east of the temple, there is a *kalyānamaṇḍapa* with beautiful sculptures on the pillars. There is the Mahālakshmī temple at the foot of the hillock, to the east of the temple. Near the eastern entrance lies a small shrine of Āñjanēya and near the western entrance lies the Śiva Temple.

The sanctum of the temple houses the presiding deity, Lakshmī Narasimha Śwāmy. In front of the deity is a small pit, one foot-deep in which it is believed, there is the right foot print (1 ½ x 1) of the Lord, facing his toes to the north There is a hollow at the southern end of the foot - print. It is said that water poured in to it, does not overflow, whatever be the quantity. The *mukhamaṇḍapa* and the *vimāna* on the sanctum were renovated in 1981. The procession - idols are found installed four kms away from Penna Ahobilam in the village temple of Āmidāla.[78]

Minor Temples of Narasimha in Anantapūr District :

The minor temples of Narasimha are found in the following places of Anantapūr District.

1. Yeṟṟa Bommanahalli
2. Yellamūru
3. Daḍithōta
4. Bēḍadūr
5. Jambulapādu
6. Bhaktara Haḷḷi
7. Bōreḍḍipalle
8. Śāsana Kōṭa
9. Rōḷḷa
10. Sōmagaṭṭa
11. Chilamathūr
12. Uddihaḷḷi
13. Chāgalēru
14. Jambulapālem
15. Dharmavaram
16. Bukkapaṭnam
17. Nāga Samudram
18. Gōnipēṭa
19. Uravakoṇḍa
20. Hiraya Dhaḷivati
21. Kotha Chinthakuṇṭa
22. Nāgarikallu
23 Pāmidi
24. Penugoṇḍa
25. Yaḍlapalli
26. Pennanūru
27 Śalakam Cheruvu
28 Kuindurpı
29. Rāllagunta
30. Koḍikoṇḍa
31. Enumalavāṇḍlapalli
32 Ōbuladēvarapalli
33. Āmıdāla
34 Pennār and
35. Jūtūr.

Most of these minor temples in the above stated places are in dilapidated condition.

A brief account of some of the minor temples of Narasimha is given below. These temples enable us to state that the cult of Narasimha has been quite popular in Anantapūr district of Rāyalaseema during the medieval period.

The Lakṣhmī Narasimha Śwāmy Temple at Sōmagatta :

This village is about 23 miles to the east of Ḥiṇḍūpūr and nearly 4 ½ miles from Koḍikoṇḍa, on Anantapūr bus route. The

temple of Śrī Lakshmī Narasimha'swāmy is on the hillock to the east of the village. A copper plate inscription dated S. 1415 (1493 A.D.) refers to its construction by one Ōbul Reddy. The temple of Sōmagaṭṭa consists of *mahāmaṇḍapa, mukhamaṇḍapa, aṅtarāla and garbhagṛiha* with a circumambulatory passage around it.

Jambulapādu

Jambulapādu is one mile from the Cuḍḍapah - Bellāry road and 5 miles from Tāḍpatri Railway station. There is a pillar erected on a pial in the village. This pillar is a personification of the deity Narasimha Śwamy. He is called by different names as "Śthaṁba Narasimha" (Sthamba in Telugu means Pillar)", Jvāla Narasimha and Girijā Narasimha. A sheet in the form of a lion's face is attached to the pillar and worshiped. The pillar of Narasimha which is of nearly 15 feet high is worshiped as a family deity. It is believed that Sri Narasimha appeared in a dream and ordained that a temple was to be raised to him in a day. No one undertook to do this as it was an impossible task.

Bhaktarahalḷi

Bhaktara Haḷḷi is situated at Harēsamudram near Hiṇḍupūr Railway station. It is said that the image of Sri Lakshmī Narasimha in this village was installed by the sage Vyāsa during his travel from North to South.

The temple of this place consists of a Garuda shrine, *mahāmaṇḍapa, mukhamaṇḍapa, antarāḷa and garbhagṛiha.* A few inscriptions at the place, mostly fragmentary, refer to Sālakarājarīya, Tirumalarājamahārāja and Śriraṅgarāyadēva.

Bukkapatnam

This village, is situated at a distance of about 18 miles north - east of Penukoṇḍa on the eastern bank of 'Chitrāvati' river at the foot of the Mallappa Koṇḍa range of hills. From the Vijayanagara rulers, it passed on to the Hanḍe Nāyaks of Bukkarāyasamudram. Traces of old fortifications can still be seen at the village. The hillocks surround the lake. There is an Ahōbalāśwāmy temple at this village.

3. Chittoor District :

In Chittoor district, there are a few shrines of Narasimha. They are found at Tirumala, Tarigoṇḍa, Kapilatīrtham, Pāpēpalli, Kothavāripalle, Kondamam, Śrīnivāsapuram, Tirumala, Reḍḍipalle, Chintamākulapalle, Kalikiri, Dēvalampēta, Mēḍikurti and Perumāḷḷapalle. These temples testify the fact that the cult of Narasimha was also popular in Chittoor district, the southernmost district of Rāyalaseema.

A brief account of some of the important shrines of Narasimha is given below.

1. Yōga Narasimha Shrine in the Tirumala Temple :

The Yōga Narasimha shrine is in the Tirumala temple which is at an altitude of 2900 feet M S.L. and about 22 kms from Tirupati town. It is located in the vimāna pradakshina to the north - east of the main shrine of Sri Vēnkateswara.

Inscriptions

There are six inscriptions relating to the shrine. There is no foundation inscription. The earliest epigraph is that of 1404 A.D., refers to the construction of the Lakshmī Narasimha maṇḍapa and the laying out of a flower garden.[79] Another inscription records an

undertking by the *Sthānattār* in Tirumala to one Giridēvappa for celebrating the seventh day festival in the Narasimha *maṇḍapa* and the *Tiruvōlakkach chiṟappu* during the summer festival in lieu of having received 600 paṇam[80]. An inscription of 1469 A.D. in the first *prākāra* in the Venkateswara temple, mentions the provision made by Kandāḍai Rāmānujayyangār, for offerings to Alagiya Śingar (Sri Narasimha Swamy) and an *'Akhaṇḍadeepam'* for the Lord.[81] Likewise, the 1493 A.D. inscription in the second *prākāra* of the temple, refers to a cash-endowment by one Tammayyan to propitiate Alagiya Singar during the *Tiruppaḷiyeḻuchchi* and on festival days like Śrī Rāma Navami.[82] There are two inscriptions of the reign of Achyutarāya. The first one records the provision made by one Tāḷḷpākkam Tirumalai Ayyangār towards the expenses of offerings for *Dhanurmāsa pūja* to Narasinga Perumāḷ.[83] The second one of 1539 A.D. mentions the arrangements made by Alavakōyiḷ Tiruvēṅkaṭa Ayyan for the daily offerings of one *Nāyaka Taḷigai* (food offering) to Narasimha on certain days.[84] The last epigraph of Narasimha shrine dated in 1542 A.D. states that provision was made by one kōyil kelvi jīyar for certain offerings to be made on prescribed days to Narasimha.[85] It is clear from the inscriptions that Narasimha was worshipped with flowers daily as part of *Shadōpachāras* (16 types of service) which is continued till date. This shrine of Narasimha flourished during 15th -16th century A.D.

The Shrine of Yōga Narasimha

It is situated to the north - east of the *vimāna pradakshina* of the main temple of Sri Venkateswara in Tirumala. The shrine consists of the *garbhagṛiha, aṅtarāḷa* and *mukhamaṇḍapa* with a pillared corridor on the north, east and the south.

2. The Temple of Lakshmī Narasimha at Tarigoṇḍa:

The Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy at Tarigonda is very famous in the region because of the oath - taking on the Lord to speak the truth in any dispute People does not speak falsehood on taking oath in the presence of Narasimha Swamy It consists of the usual structural design of the *sanctum, aṅtarāḷa* and which contains *mukhamaṇḍapa* interesting sculptures

3. The Lakshmī Narasimha Shrine at Kapilatīrtam:

Kapilatīrtam is situated at a distance of about three kilometers to the north of the Tirupati town, at the foot of the Tirumala hills with a picturesque water falls known as kapilatīrtam. According to puranic tradition, sage Kapila installed the Śiva linga here and the Linga came to be called Kapilēśwara and the tank Kapilatīrtam. The tank is also known as 'Sudarsanatīrtam' and 'Chakratīrtam' because at the four corners of the tank, the stone slabs contain relief sculptures of Sudarasana or Chakrattāḷvār.[86]

The Lakshmī Narasimha Shrine

This is situated, above the western pillared corridor of the tank. It houses the image of Lakshmī-Narasimha. Since Narasimha is a cave dweller, this shrine has been conceived of in the form of a cave, cut as it were, in to the Tirumala Hill. The image of Lakshmī Narasimha was set up in the shrine probably at the time of installation of Lakshmī - Nārāyana, is S 1467 (20 - 6-1546 A.D.) by Tāllapākam Periya Tirumalayyangār.[87]

4. The Lakshmī Narasimha Temple at Pāpēpalle:

This village is situated at distance of one mile from the 14/3 mile stone of Gālivedu - Gurramkoṇḍa road, 25 miles from

Kurabalakōta Railway Station and 36 miles from Manadapalle by road. The village contains Lord Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy temple with the stone, wooden and three processional metal images of Narasimha. One furlong to the north of Lakshmī Narasimhaswamy temple, there is a Kōnēru (tank) known as mukhamandapa *"Baṇḍapaina Kōnēru"*.

5. The Narasimhaswamy Temple at Kothavāri Palli :

Kothavāripalle, a small village is situated 2 furlongs from Lacha Reddy cheruvu and 3 miles from Madanapalle via Lacha Reḍḍy Cheruvu on Madanpalle- Chembakūru bus route. The village is famous for the temple of Lord Narasimhaswamy. The festival of Lord Narasimhaswamy takes place on phalguṇa, Śuddha Pūrṇima for a day *in accordance with the well known Tirunāḷa* of Kadiri in Anantapūr district. Devotees fulfil their vows. Large quantity of *pānakam* (Jaggery water) is offered to the deity The deity is taken out in procession on festive occasions

6. The Lakshmī Narasimha Temple at Koṇḍamarri:

Kondamarri, a small village is situated at a distance of about 2½ miles from Puriganūr - Kallūr motor route. The Lakshmī Narasimhaswāmy temple is on a hillock with His self manifested stone image in the form of a plantain bud which is said to be growing year after year. The festival of Lord Lakshmī Narasimhaswamy is celebrated on all Sāturdays from Srāvaṇa Śuddha Pādyami to Bahula Amāvāsya. This is concluded by *"Puṭṭa Tirunāḷa"* (Puṭṭa-anthill) on the last Sāturday and Sunday. Dhoopa, deepa, naivēdyam, *eyes and fangs of precious metals* are offered to the deity.

4. Cuḍḍapah District :

In Cuḍḍapah District, the temples of Narasimha are to be found in the following places.

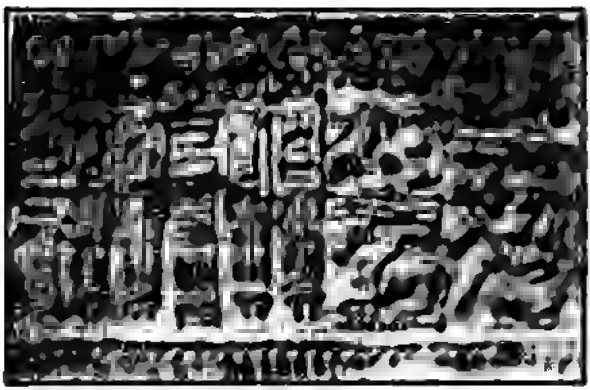
1	Peddamuḍiyam	10	Irnakaḷḷu
2.	Jeelavārnpalle	11.	Pōrumāmilla
3.	Koṇḍaśunkēśula	12	Bommavaram
4.	Vōgunūtala	13.	Chinnakōmerla
5.	Gaṇḍikota	14	Veyyinūtalakōna
6.	Pothipādu	15	Timmanayānipēṭa
7	Kongunutla	16.	Ahōbalam (Pulivendla)
8.	Kalluṭla	17.	Pennapērūru and
9.	Penavaram	18	Yētūru

Of all the above stated places, the temples at Peddamuḍiyam are important, while the rest are minor shrines of Narasimha.

1. Temples of Narasimha at Peddamuḍiyam

Peddamuḍiyam, a small village on the left bank of river Kundēru, is at a distance of nineteen kms from Jammalamaḍugu, the taluk head quarters in Cuḍḍapah district. This village was also known as 'Trilōchanapura', 'Brāhmaṇamuḍiyam' and 'Muḍiyam'. Peddamuḍiyam is famous for two temples of Narasimha. The first one is on the riverbank and it is known as Ugra (Vidārana) Narasimha Swamy Temple and the second one is one kilometre away to the east of the first temple and it is known as Yōgananda Narasimha Swamy Temple. The former is earlier than the latter,

There are four epigraphs which give some information about the temples of Narasimha. The antiquity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema, can be gleaned from a stone plaque found at this place (**Plate 1**). In it there is a representation of nine deities, including Narasimha which is third in order from the left and it belongs to the fifth or sixth century A.D.[88] Sivarāmamurti is of the opinion that this sculpture belongs to the 6th Century A.D. An inscription of 12th century A.D. is found in the Siva Temple at Peddamudiyam. It states that a grant of the Mudivēmu village was made to the



1. Stone plaque showing Narasimha, Peddamudiyam, 6th century A.D.

Mahājanās of that place in 1124 A.D. by Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara in the presence of God Narasimha of Ahobala,[89] most probably of this place[90] during the reign of the Chālukya King, Tribhuvana Malladēva. The inscription refers itself to the reign of the Chālukya King Tribhuvana Malladēva and mentions his feudatory, the Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Anma Chōla Mahārāja and his feudatory, the

Mahāmaṇḍalēsvara Chiddana Chōḷa mahārāja who made a grant. There is another epigraph of 1551 A.D. from the same Siva temple in Peddamuḍiyam, which records the gift of Brāhmaṇa muḍiyam village to God Narasimha by one Chinna Bānavayya.[91] Yet another inscription of 1557 A.D in the Narasimha temple in this village, refers to the arrangement made for the 'Pāruvēta' (Hunting Festival) of Narasimha of 'Brāhmaṇa muḍiyam Agrahāram' by two devotees, Gaurayya and Nāgayya, during the reign of king Sadāśiva.[92] Further, an undated inscription in the Narasimha temple, records a gift of land as *māṇyam* by 108 Mahājans of Brāhmaṇa muḍiyam to two artisans for building the *śikhara* to the Narasimha temple and for its permanent maintenance and repairs.[93]

The temple of Vidārana (Ugra or ferocious) Narasimha Swamy consists of a *sanctum ahtarāḷa and mukhamaṇḍapa*. A feature worthy of note is that the deity in the sanctum has *Ashṭabhujas* (eight arms).

The other temple of Yōgānanda Narasimha Swamy on the outskirts of the village has shrines for Navagrahas and Śiva within the temple. On the axis, the Yōgānanda Narasimha temple consists of a sanctum and *mukhamaṇḍapa* and faces to the east. In front of the presiding deity, there is a standing stone sculpture of Lakshmī on a pedestal, which is 2 ft in height.

Minor Temples of Narasimha in Cuḍḍapah District

The places having some minor temples of Narasimha have been listed above. These temples confirm the fact that the cult of Narasimha as in other districts, was popular in this part of

Rāyalaseema. These temples are smaller in size and modest in scale. The temples in their construction and iconographic features of the images and the sculptures therein do not differ much.

1. The Narasimha at Pennapērūru :

This is associated with a historic fact of the British Collector, Munro who said that he would confirm the *inām* tenure of the temple service only when the God appear before him. It is said that the collector's wish was fulfilled and the *inām* was returned after the Karanam's prayer to the God.

2. The Narasimha Swamy Temple at Veyyinūtulakōna :

This temple is located in a picturesque setting of a valley of a thousand wells Hence the name of the area is called 'Veyyinūtala - Kōna'.

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RITUALS AND FESTIVALS .

Temple rituals are the ceremonies performed by the priest in a temple. By reciting the 'Mantrās' of the scriptures, the priest invokes the God for human welfare and for particular blessings to the devotees. Festivals are celebrated on special occasions for religious ceremonies in the presence of large gatherings in the temple. The fairs or 'Tirunāḷḷu' conducted on their occasion attract large social gatherings and promote devotion to the deity. The festivals are celebrated with great jubilation with the back drop of religion. The festivals may be of a single day or couple of days or even a week.

Prayer to God is a general Hindu daily ritual by the devotee to pay his respects to the family deity and invoke His blessings. According to the Hindu tradition, a Hindu is born with three debts to be discharged in the cause of his life, namely i) The debt he owes to his parents and ancestors, ii) The debt he owes to the ancient Rishies (seers) and iii) The debt he owes to the Gods and the Nature. This is the origin of the charities to the temples to secure religious merit and divine grace. The charities to the temples as known from the inscriptions include those of (1) Construction (2) Renōvation of Temples (3), Consecration of images, (4) Construction of Mandapas and (5) Kōnērus (water ponds) and flower and fruit gardens-all to propitiate the God. These will be studied in detail in the sequel.

1. Construction of Temples :

The construction of temples and auxiliary structures and installation of deities was considered an act of great religious merit.

The temple was conceived as the Manifestation of the supreme and its construction was therefore, the best way of worshipping Him. The construction of a temple, which is one of the 'Saptasantānas' was expected to confer on the builder several benefits like longevity, health, wealth and prosperity in this world, besides religious merit in the other world. It is for these reasons that many people, from princes down to the ordinary citizens, vied with one another in building temples. Bukka built a temple to Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy on the Gooty Hill in Anantapūr District and consecrated the image of the God in it.[1] Similarly, Harihara built a 'maṇṭapa' to God Narasimha Swāmy at Paṭarapalli [2]

Private individuals also shared the noble service to God in the construction and renovation of temples The Ambavaram Kaifiyat says that Prouḍa Dēvarāya (1442-46 A.D.) of Vijayanagara built a Narasimha temple at Bommavaram, consecrated the image of God and also provided for the 'aṅga rangabhōgas' to the God.[3]

2. Renovation of Temples:

Besides the construction of temples, renovation of old temples was also considered a sacred act for gaining spiritual merit and material prosperity. The technical word for this renovation is 'Jīrnōddhāra'. The renovation works included (i) repairs to the temple structure, (ii) construction of *prākāra, vimāna, gōpura,* and 'Garuḍa Stambhas', (iii) repairs to *maṇḍapas* and (iv) flights of steps to the temple. Interesting information is available from the inscriptions regarding the renovative works In the Rāyalaseema region, the famous Vijayanagara kings undertook the task of upholding 'Sanātana Hindu Dharma' which covered the renovation

of temples also. The renovation of the temple at Kaḷḷuṭḷa and the *Rathōtsava* and other festivals of Lord Narasimha were conducted during the reign of Achyutarāya in 1536 A.D.[4]

3. Construction of Vimānas, Gōpuras and Maṇḍapas:

An inscription of 1490 A.D. of the reign of Śaḷuva Narasimha of Vijayanagara, states that the tall 'gōpura' of Lakshmī Narasimha Perumāḷ shrine at Alipiri (at the foot of the Tirumala Hill) was the charitable service of Kārveṭṭipuḷi-Āḷvār - Mannār Piḷḷai of Uttara Mērūr.[5] One Maḍiseṭṭi Rudrayya and others made the gift of seven gold-gilded kalaśas (pinnacle) to the God Ahōbaḷa Vīra Narasimha Dēvara at Lower Ahōbilam in 1609 A.D.[6] Prōlaya Vēma Reḍḍy, a popular Reḍḍy King (1423-47 A.D.) built flight of steps to the Upper Ahōbilam Temple in 1337 A.D.[7] Renovation was necessary for proper maintenance of the temple structures to procure spiritual merit.

4. Consecration of the Images :

The consecration of images is considered as great as temple construction. The consecration is performed at the time of construction of new temples or renovation of the old temple or when the image was destroyed or destroyed by the Muslim invaders. The consecration of images was undertaken for the merit of parents, families and of the devotees themselves. According to the Pāñcharātra Āgamas, the images are classified as i) 'Dhruvārcha' (Mūlavirāt) ii) 'Karmārcha' (for daily worship) iii) 'Utsavārcha' or Kautuka (for procession) iv) 'Bāḷyārcha' (for daily Bāḷihāraṇa) v) 'Snānārcha' (for bathing purpose) vi) 'Mukhārcha' (for Brahmōtsava celebration) vii) 'Tīrthārcha' (for Arabhṛidham) and viii) 'Swapothanārcha' (for sayanōtsavas).[8]

The process of consecration of images started from 13th century A.D. and continued till the 17th century A.D. Kings and their nobles and private individuals took up the task of consecrating the images in the temples. In 1229 A.D. the image of god Yōgānanda Narasimhadēva was set up to the north of the Chinna Tumbalam village by Ananta priya during the reign of Jaitugi, the Yādava king[9] and was patronised not only by the kings but also by private individuals. King Bukkarāya-I reinstalled the image of Yōgānanda Narasimha Swamy and erected a Pagōḍa at Gaṇḍikōṭa in 1375 A.D.[10] Besides, the images of God Narasimha, the image of twelve Vaishnava Āḻvars (Panniḍḍaru Ālvars) were also consecrated in the temple of Vōbaladēva (Narasimha) at Vōnūtala in the cyclic year Durmathi which corresponds to (1441-42 A.D.),[11] in the reign of Dēvarāya-II (1422-46 A.D.)

Sārvabhauma Saḷuva Narasimha of Vijayanagara consecrated an image of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha on the foot-path up the Seshādri Hill leading to Tirumala in 1485 A.D.[12] Two inscriptions of 16th century, mention the 'Pratishṭa' of the Narasimha images in the 'siru (Chinna) Tirumalai Iyengar installed Sri Narasingapperumāl within the temple of Kaṭṭari Hanumān in 1547 A.D. in Tirupati during the reign Sadāsiva of Vijayanagara.[13]

5. Construction of the Maṇḍapas :

Several devotees evinced keen interest in constructing maṇḍapas within the precincts of the temples. The purpose of construction of 'maṇḍapas' was to celebrate certain regular festivals of the Lord and to give easy 'Darsan" to one and all. An inscription of 1590 A.D. from Lower Ahōbilam supports this view and states

that an individual gave a gift of land for offerings during the procession of God Prahlāda Varada (Narasimha) at Lower Ahōbilam during the reign of Venkaṭapati of Vijayanagara.[14] There are a number of such grants at Ahōbilam and other places.

The earliest inscription in this series of maṇḍapas is of 1352 A.D. of the reign of Bukka-I of Vijayanagara. It states that the construction of the mandapa of Aubhaladēva temple in Kadiri[15] was completed by one Paṇḍima Sannāyini Chelināyaka. Another inscription of the Vijayanagara king Harihara-II, records the construction of a mandapa in the Ahōbila temple in 1395 A.D.[16] An epigraph of 1404 A.D mentions the building of a maṇṭapa for Lakshmī Narasimha at Tirupati.[17] A maṇḍapa for Ahōbilēswara at Kottachintakunta was built in 1527 A.D.[18]

Now we note the inscriptions which mention not only the construction of the maṇḍapas but also certain festivals performed on certain occassions when the God is installed in the maṇḍapas An inscription of 1548 A.D. records the construction of a 'Vasanta mandapa' to the north of Lower Ahōbilam by one Narasamma, wife of Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Goburi Vōbaya during the rule of Sadāsiva of Vijayanagara. He had also endowed 120 *varahas* to the temple for conducting the festivals in honour of Ahōbilēśwara seated in the maṇḍapa[19] from the interest accruing on the endowment. The 1553 A.D inscription also mentions a cash endowment for offering during the sixteen day festival, every year when the God is seated in the sixteen pillared maṇḍapa in the Upper Ahōbilam temple. Emberumānār Jiyyangār and others had also endowed a piece of land and money in 1558 A.D. for the conduct of festivals to the

Lord in the maṇḍapa and when the God was taken in procession to Lower Ahōbilam[20] and back. Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Gōpinātha Rāju, during the reign of Sadāśiva, made a gift of money in 1560 A.D. for conducting the 'maṇḍapa' festivals to the Lord Ahōbalēśwara in the Lower Ahōbilam temple.[21] According to the Ahōbilam Kaifiyat, the four pillared maṇtapa was constructed by Gopinatha Rāju. The word 'Bhōga' is associated with a particular maṇḍapa for 'the enjoyment' to the God in the maṇḍapa. There is a four pillared maṇḍapa in the Upper Ahōbilam which was built by Parāmkuśa Van Sathakopa Jīyyangār. He made a gift of land in 1563 A.D. for offerings to Ahōbilēśwara while seated in the mandapa during the 'Pañchaparvas'. During the reign of Sadāśiva, a provision was made for offering and services to the god seated in the 16 pillared maṇḍapa built in the Lower Tirupati (Ahōbilam) on special occasions.[22] Thus, during 14th-17th centuries, a number of maṇḍapas have been added not only by kings and nobles but also by pious devotees for the enjoyment of the God.

6. Construction of Kōnērus (Water Tanks) :

Water tanks (pushkarinis) were necessary adjuncts to temples. There are instances of tanks being constructed for bathing purposes of the god and the devotees. An inscription of 1564 A.D. states that during the reign of Sadāsiva, Śri Saṭhagōpa Jīyyangāru has constructed a 'Kōnēru' on the way to Bhārgava Narasimha temple and also provided for offerings to the Lord in the 'Chaitra' month on the eve of festivals.[23]

7. Plantation of Flower and Fruit Gardens :

Flower and fruit gardens were raised for the supply of basil leaves (Tulasi) and fruits for the *Naivēdya* of the God. An inscription of 1404 A.D records the laying out of a flower-garden at Tirupati for Narasimha Swamy [24] An epigraph of 1550 A.D. from Chinna Ahōbilam states that Avubhalarāju raised a garden with coconut and other fruit bearing trees in favour of Ahobalēśwara of Ahōbilam. Besides the kings and nobles, their relatives also contributed for the raising of the gardens as service to God. One Achchamma, Daughter of Śri Ranga Rājayya Dēva Mahārāja had made a gift for the maintenance of 'Tirunandanavanam' in 1558 A.D. during the rule of King Sadāsiva.[25] Thus, the grants made for the gardens tell us their importance in the worship of God Narasimha.

A. Rituals in the Temples :

There are several sacred texts dealing with the rituals in the temples. The earliest is the *Vishnu Smruti* consisting of an invocation to the deity, the offering of 'Ārghya' or water for washing the hands and feet, for sipping and bathing, offering the deity of incense, holy garments, ornaments and flowers etc , and worshipping of the 'Akhanda Dīpa' (the perpetual lamp) [26] The rites and practices relating to daily worship of the deity were regularised in works like the *Baudhāyana Grihya Sūtras*[27] and *Vaikhānasa Smārtasūtras*.[28] The various forms of worship were all standardised into sixteen acts of worship popularly known as *'Shōḍasōphchāras'*. All the credit for the standardisation of the sixteen *Upachāras* in shrines dedicated to Vishnu goes to the Vaishnava saint Śri Rāmānuja[29] and his disciples and their descendents, known as 'Āchārya Purushas' for the

propagation of the Vaishnava mode of worship. The common feature between the *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāncharātra* systems of worship is the 'Archa' (Icon) form of the Lord since it enables the process of *'Prapatti'* absolute surrender of the devotees. The priests strongly believed that the performance of all the '*Shōdasōpachāras*' in the temples not only purifies the performer but also creates a cosmic force at a particular centre bringing holiness and happiness to all the residents besides leading to general welfare (Lōka Kalyānārtham). The *Sōdaśa* (sixteen) *Upchārās* are widespread and popular in Rāyalaseema.

It was firmly believed that rituals and utsavas were invigorating and strengthening the power of the god for bestowing the blessings upon the devotees. The Sanskrit word 'Utsava' indicates the grace of God that dispels human misery and sorrow.[30] To alleviate the multitude of sorrows of human beings, the 'Āgama Śāstras' have prescribed the various periodical utsavas[31] such as i) '*Nityōtsava*' (daily ceremony), ii) *Pakshōtsava*) (fortnightly ceremony), iii) 'Māsōtvasa' (monthly ceremony) and *'Varshōtsava'* (Annual ceremony). In addition to these, there were *'Vārōtsava'* (weekly festivals) and the *'Tirunakshatras'* of the Vishnavite Āḻvārs and other minor festivals. The above mentioned utsavas as known from the available inscriptions are discussed below.

1. Nityōtasavās (Daily Ceremonies) :

The rituals in a temple from morning to the night daily, attract and impress the devotees and result in spreading the Narasimha cult. *Purushōttama Saṁhita* describes the daily 'Utsavas' (Nityōtsavās) that are to be performed in the temples. According

to the inscription available and the interviews held with a few priests, the rituals and festivals performed in the temples under study are discussed below. The rituals from morning to night, which were performed in the temples since distant past through traditions, oral and recorded, have the sanction of the Āgama Sāstras. An inscription of 1561 A D from the Lower Ahōbilam temple, describes the worship to the Lord as 'Tiruvārādhana' [32] It seems that a daily worship to the God was the usual practice in these days. The inscription from Chinnadāsarīpalli dated 1370 A.D. registers the gift of the village named after the God Ahōbalēswara at Vēyinūtula by Nambi Nāranadās. for the 'Nityōtsava' of the God during the reign of Bukkarāya-I of Vijayanagara.[33] Some important daily rituals performed in the temples under study are discussed below.

(i) Akhanda Dīpam (The Perpetual Lamp)

The *Akhanda Dīpam* (Perpectual lamp) is lit throughout the day and night in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple in the divine presence of the deity with ghee or oil The procedure of burning this lamp is narrated in the *Pāncharātra Samhita*.[34] The perpetual lamp enhances the radiance of the Lord who is the symbol of light. Another interpretation is that the *Akkanda-Jyōti* is the 'Ātma' of the temple in which the God resides in the Archarūpa' (Icon form). It purifies the souls of devotees It is replaced on every 'Kārttika Pūrnima' (November December) in the year There is Sanskrit saying as.[35]

"Jyōtishnata Vimanena
Vishnu Lōke Mahīyate"

means that he who presents the Akhanda-Dīpam to the God goes to the Vishnu Lōka or 'Vykuntam' (Paramapadam) sitting in the

'vimāna' as vehicle. With this faith, the kings, queens, nobles and their relations made endowments in cash or kind for the provision of the *Akhaṇḍa-Dīpa*. The institution of Akhaṇḍa-Dīpas in the Narasimha temples as known from the inscriptions started in the 12th century and continued till 17th century.

(ii) The 'Maṅgala Gītas' :

These were sung praying the deity to wake up. They are known as 'Suprabhāta Gītas'. The 'Vēnkateswara Suprabhāta' is a very popular Gīta in the South.

(iii) The Saṅkīrtana :

Both in the morning and evening, this was recited describing the various names of the God by a specially appointed person in the temple and the devotees take up the Saṅkīrtana, also known as 'Bhajana'.

(iv) Ārādhana :

Ārādhana or worship of the Lord is the crux of the temple rituals. According to the *Matsya Purāna*, the priests should be faultless, righteous persons, well versed in the Vēdas and Puranas and should be 'Dvijas' of high descent. *Ārādhana* should start with 'Dīpārādhana'.

Ārādhana consists of sixteen types of services known popularly as 'Shōdasōpachāras'. The following sixteen 'Upachāras' are observed in the Vishnu temples.[36]

1. ĀVĀHANAM	-	Invocation of Lord's presence
2. ĀSANAM	-	He is offered a seat
3. PADYAM	-	He is offered water for washing the holy feet

4. ĀRGHYAM - The God is given water for washing hands.

5. ACHAMANIYAM - The God is given water for taking in

6. PANCHĀMRITHAM - The five ingredients of *Panchāmritham* are
i) Cow's milk with Sugar
ii) Curds made of Cow's milk
iii) Butter or Ghee made of Cow's milk
iv) Honey and
v) A little water after the offer of 'Madhu Parkam' (clothes), 'Sudha Achamaniyam' is done followed by water with *Panchāmritha* for the holy bath of the deity.

7. VASTRA DVAYAM - Presentation of holy dress followed by *Suddhachamaniyam*

8. YAGÑŌPAVĪTAM - Offer of nine-stranded thread followed by *Suddhachamaniyam*

9. GAṄDHAM & ALANKARAṆAM		Offering of Sandal paste followed by offer of ornaments for decoration
10. PUSHPAM	-	Keeping of flowers and Basil (Tulasi) leaves on the Lord.
11. DHŪPAM	-	Incense is offered to the God
12. DIPAM	-	*Hārathi* with lit wicks (lighted lamp) to the God
13. NAIVĒDYAM	-	Cooked food and fruits are offered to the God
14. TĀMBŪLAM	-	Betel leaves are offered to God
15. NĪRĀJANAM	-	*Hārathi* (lighted lamp) is shown to the God.
16. ĀTMA PRADAKSHINA	-	The last of the *Shōdasōpachārās* is showing NAMASKARAM showing obeisance, making of three rounds from left to right in the presence of the Lord-concluding act of *Ārādhana*.

The *Shōḍasa Upachārās* (sixteen kinds of doing homage to the deity) in vogue are referred to in an inscription of 1448 A.D.[37]

(v) Tirumañjanam :

The sacred bath to God is performed with milk and water An inscription of 1561 A.D clearly mentions the provision for the *Tirumañjana* service to the Ahōbilēswara of Ahōbilam.[38] *Tirumañjana-kaḍuva* is a pot with holy water for the bath of the deity This service is popularly known as *'Abhishēka'* with holy water in a silver cup known as *Sahasradhāra-Talya.* There are scores of records recording the endowments made either in cash or in kind for a *Tirumañjana-kaḍuva* daily in the morning.[39]

(vi) Garland of Basil Leaves (Tulaśimāla) :

On the occasion of *Tirumañjana* garlands of basil leaves (Tulasimāla) are offered to the God

(vii) Purusha Sūktam :

On the eve of *Tirumañjana* or *Abhiṣēkha* of the God, the *Purusha Sūktam* is read out. The greatness of the God is revealed in the *Purusha Sūktam*

(viii) Yajnōpavītam :

After the holy bath, nine stranded sacred threads called *Yajnōpavītam* is offered to the God.

(ix) Sandal Paste (Chañdanam) :

Sandal paste is prepared from a piece of sandalwood with a little water rubbed on the 'Sāna Rāyi', specially made for the purpose and offered to the God. An endowment was made in cash to the Ahōbilam temple during the reign of Venkatarāya of Vijayanagara

in 1585 A.D.[40] Another epigraph of 1507 A.D. mentions the supply of Sandal paste (Chaṅdanam) to Aḷagiya Śingar of Śrīnivāsapuram, near Tirupati.[41]

(x) Alaṁkaraṇam (Decoration) :

We come across the Vaḍagalai Vaishnava *Thiru Nāman* ('U' shape) caste mark on a stone slab near the temple of Narasimha Swamy at Eguvapalli in Cuddapah District At the top of the inscription dated 1547 A D , the Vaishnava Vaḍagalai (a sect of Vaishnavas) castemark is carved on the slab.[42] Thus we can infer that the decoration of the forehead of the God was in vogue either in the Vaḍagalai style of 'U' shaped caste mark or the Teṅgalai style of 'Y' shaped castemark, both belonging to the Sri Vaishnava culture. Perhaps both the marks had been prevalent from the 16th century onwards as attested by the inscriptions. Then the Lord was decorated with garlands of leaves and flowers. There are nearly twenty three inscriptions from 1104 A.D to 1561 A.D. attesting to this type of daily practice, both in the morning and evening in the temples of Ahōbilam[43] and Simhāchalam After the garlands, the God is decorated with precious ornaments. There are about fifteen inscriptions recording gifts of various ornaments from 1291 A D to 1599 A D to Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy at places like Kadiri and Ahōbilam.[44]

(xi) Dhūpadīpam :

Incense and the lamp of wicks are offered to the God.

(xii) Tāmbūḷam :

After the Naivēdyam to the God, *Tāmbūlam* or *Vidyam* (Betel leaves and arecanuts) is offered to the God. An inscription

of 1507 A.D. records that 50 arecanuts and 100 betel leaves were offered to the God Aḷagiya Singar of Śrīnivāsapuram on *Vasantapūrnima* day.[45]

(xiii) Vinjāmara :

This is a white hairy fly-wisk (fan) with a silver coated stick. It is used for fanning the God. A Sanskrit verse says that, He who serves the Lord with a *Chāmara* will attain 'Mōksha'46. An inscription of 1609 A.D. records the gift of two *Chāmaras* to the Vīra Narasimha temple at Diguva Tirupati (Lower Ahōbilam) by private individuals during the reign of Vīra Venkatapati of Vijayanagara.[47]

(xiv) Nritya :

Dance (Nritya) in a temple by young dancers was considered a part of temple rituals in the medieval period. One Venkatavalli, a damsel was attached to the Narasimha Swāmy Temple in Tirupati in 1457 A.D.[48]

(xv) Sahasranāmārchana :

The practice of reading *Sahasra nāmas* (Thousand Names) of the God during mid day daily was in vogue in the temples. The God is worshipped either with flowers or with basil leaves in the morning and by chanting His thousand names in the temples by the priests. An inscription of 1545 A.D. states that *Sahasranāma* worship was instituted at the temple of Upper Ahōbilam and provisions were made for the appointment of a priest, who recites the *Sahasranāmas*.[49] This practice is popular even today in all the temples, dedicated to Vishnu.

(xvi) Pānakam Sēva (Jaggery Water):

In addition to food-stuffs and milk, the God was offered *Pānakam* (Jaggery water) daily This was in practice from 1493 A.D.[50] to 1547 A.D [51] Of these, the earliest is that of 1493 A.D which records the daily offering of *Pānakam* to the God of Narasimha in the shrine at Tirumala. Similarly, in the other shrines like Narasimha (Aḍippuhaḍi Singar) in Tirupati, the God was offered *Tiruppānakam* (Pānakam) in 1507 A D. and in 1547 A D

(xvii) The Bhōgam, Mēlam and Tāna Mēlālu :

An inscription of 1561 A.D form Ahōbilam, of reign of Sadāśiva of Vijayanagara, records that Timmarāja had instituted the services of 'Bhōgam, Mēḷam 'and 'Tāna Mēlam' in the Ahōbilam temples.[52] It indicates singing and dancing for the enjoyment of the God by qualified persons who could play on certain musical instruments during the performance of rituals.

(xviii) Goḍavu :

This is called 'Chatra' in Sanskrit and Goḍugu in Telugu. The umbrella service is meant to give shelter to the God from the sun and the rain when He is taken out from the shrine for the procession in the town. An inscription of 1609 A D from Chinna Ahōbilam records a white silk umbrella to the God Ahōbala Vīra Narasimhadēva in Diguva Tirupati (Lower Ahōbilam) for his service.[53]

(xiv) Satha Kōpam :

This is a round vessel, made of silver or copper with small figures of the foot-prints of God Vishnu on the outer apex of the vessel. This is always kept in a plate before the processional idols

of the God in such a way that the foot-prints are visible to the devotees. The devotees who visit the temple are blessed by the touch of *Śaṭhagōpam* upon their heads, which is considered as keeping the feet of the God on their heads in humility to gain blessing from the God.

The Ahōbilam Kaifiyat of 1584 says that the temple honours such as 'Paṇavaṭṭam, 'Tīrtham', 'Prasādam' 'Śaṭhakōpam', 'Taḷga Prasādam', 'Pannīru' and 'Gandham' were in practice in the temple of Narasimha of Ahōbilam.[54]

Thus, the rituals in a temple would commence from the early morning and continue till night in a day, celebrating the above stated different types of rituals for the service and enjoyment of the God.

2. Festivals :

Apart from the above discussed *Nityōtsava* (Daily ceremony), the following *Utsavās* are also celebrated in the temples of Narasimha under study

(i) Vārōtsavas (Weekly Ceremony):

An inscription of S 1466- 1544 A.D. 'Plavanga' year mentions that on every Friday, 'Puḷikāpu Kaṅkaryam' and special offering were made to God Ahōbilam Narasimha during the reign of Sadāsiva of Vijayanagara.[55]

(ii) Pakshōtsavas (Fortnightly Ceremony) :

These are celebrated every fortnight regularly in the Narasimha temples.

(iii) Māsōtsavas (Monthly Ceremony) :

These are celebrated once in every month in the temples under study.

(iv) Varshōtsavas (Annual Festival) :

The annual festivals are celebrated once in a year regularly to propitiate the presiding deity. The important annual festival is called the *BRAHMŌTSAVAM* of which the car festival (Rathōtsavam) attracts devotees from far and wide. At every house the deity is offered 'Harathi' that is supposed to bring welfare and happiness to them.

Another important annual festival is *Tirupalli-eluchchi* which is known as 'DHANURMĀSAM' festival. The earliest record relating to the observance of this 'Dhanurmāsam' festival occurs in 1493 A.D. at Narasimha Swamy shrine in Tirumala.[56] On the occasion of Dhanurmāsa festival, jaggery water (Tirupānakam) was offered to the God Aḷagiya Śingar (Narasimha) enshrined within the temple of Tiruvēṅkaṭamuḍaiyān (Sri Venkateswara) in Tirumala.[57] Two other records of 1536 A.D.[58] and an undated inscription attest the practice of the *Utsava* in the shrine of Narasimha in Tirumala.

The third annual festival is 'KŌYIAḶ ĀḶVĀR TIRUMAṄJANAM' which is meant for cleaning the sanctum and later on offerings were given to the God. This practice was attested by an inscription of 1554 A.D. from Tirupati.[59] This inscription refers to the celebration of Brahmōtsavam in the temple of Narasimha. It also refers to the 'Adhyayanōtsavam, for God Narasimha in 1544 A.D. when the *Divya Prabandha* known as '*Nālāyiram*' is recited in the temple. The earliest reference to it in the Tirumala occurs in 1400 A.D. and the latest reference is in 1635 A.D.[60] It is still performed in all Vishnu temples in Āndhra Pradēsh. Suffice is to say that yearly *utsavās* continued till 17th century, the period of our study.

Special Utsavās :

In addition to the above stated *utsavas*, other *utsavas* such as *Angaraṅga bhōgas, Mahōtsavas, Tirukkōḍi-tirunāl* and *Tirunāḷḷu* were also performed in the temples of Narasimha.

Aṅgaranga Bhōgas :

This relates to all enjoyments daily or occasional rituals to the God in the temples in perpetuity. There are epigraphical references to the celebration of *Aṅgaraṅga bhōgas* in Vōgunūtula in 1350 A.D.[61] Ahōbilam in 1515 A.D.[62] and 1529 A.D.[63]

2. Mahōtsavas :

These were grand ceremonies performed in the temple for the enjoyment of the God An inscription of 1557 A D from Peddamuḍiyam village in Cuḍḍapah District, mentions the provision made for 'Pāruveta Mahōtsava' to the God Narasimha.[64] The pleasure ride of the God on his vehicle, Garuda to the outskirts of the village generally on the Vijayadasami day is known as 'Pāruveta Mahōtsava'.

3. Tirukkoḍi - Tirunāl (Brahmōtsavam) :

Apart from the celebration of the annual 'Brahmōtsavas', occasional 'Brahmōtsavas' were also celebrated in the temples under study. An inscription of 1493 A D describes that seven Tirukkoḍi Tirunāl's were celebrated in the Tiruvēnkaṭa muḍiyāṉ temple on Tirumala Hills, and on the seventh day in each of the *seven 'Tirukkoḍi Tirunāl', Atiraśa paḍi* (Special offering)' was offered to the God Aḷagiya Śingar (Narasimha Swamy) enshrined within the Tirumala temple.[65] Further Alagiya Śingar of Śrīnivāspuram was also given the *'Atirasa paḍi'* on each of the 7th festival day in 1507 A D.[66]

Another record of 1536 A.D from the same place, states that the special offering of '*Dōsaipadi*' was instituted on the ninth day (Sēshavāhana festival of Vaikāsi and *Āni Brahmōtsavas* of Sri Narasimha in Śrīnivāsapuram, a subsurb of Tirupati.[67]

4. Tirunāḷlu

These festivals are celebrated for some time or stipulated period occasionally. An inscription of 1410 A.D from the Upper Ahōbilam states that a provision was made for the conduct of '*Tirunāḷa Mahōtsavas* to the God Vēdadri Sri Narasimha Dēvara.[68] Another inscription of 1548 A.D from Yerragudi village, mentions the arrangement made for the conduct to *Tirunāḷa* to God Sri Ahōbilalēśvara of the place. Yet another inscription of 1564 A.D. from the Upper Ahōbilam, mentions that *ubhaya Tirunāls* were instituted for God Ahōbalēśvara.[69]

B. The Festivals in the Temples :

The conduct of the daily rituals differs naturally from the festivals of the God. Sādhu Subramanya Sāstri equates the 'Utsavas' with *Tirunāḷs* of festivals.[70]

According J. Gonda, 'the temple festivals invigorate and strengthen the powers of the deity periodicaly.[71] The *utsavas* in the temples may be classified into two categories according to the nature of their institutions.

'Festivals sanctioned by the Āgama Sāstras'

'Festivals evolved by the custom or sishṭāchāra'

The first category may be said as the fundamental festivals ordained by the Āgama and Dharma Sāstras to be observed scrupulously on fixed times and any dereliction would be deemed

profane which needs preliminary purification rites. 'Brahmōtsavas' belong to this category.

The second category are auxiliary festivals which have the origin in the traditional divine life of the deity or in the incarnations or *Avatāras* of God Vishnu, 'Dhanurmāsam' festivals and those conducted on the day of 'Tirunakshatram' of deities or Ālvārs come under this category. Here, we take up the general Hindu festivals and *Tirunakshatras* of the deities as other *Utsavas* are dealt with earlier. These festivals are given in chronological order, with a view to note the antiquity of the festival and their celebration in the various temples during the period of study. There are nearly twelve festivals known from the inscriptions, observed in the temples during the medieval period 'Purushōttama Samhita' gives an account of the festivals which are to be celebrated in the temples on stipulated days [72] As per the epigraphs, the following festivals were known to have been performed in the temples

(1) Jalasayana Ēkādaśi Festival :

This is also called 'Sayana Ēkādaśi' or Toli Ēkādaśi' or 'Prathama Ēkādaśi' in the Telugu month of 'Āshāḍha' This is observed even now in all the temples. There are instances of charities made to the God on this day, which is considered holy On the day of Pratama Ēkādaśi, the Vijayanagara King Sri Krishnadēvarāya made an endowment of land in the year 1529 A.D for providing 'Aṅgaraṅga Bhōgas' and 'Dhūpa Dīpa Naivēdyas' to the God Ahōbala Sri Narasimhadēva.[73]

Similarly, an inscription of 1556 A.D. from Penna Ahōbilam records the remission of certain taxes on 'Agrahāra' villages on this 'Ashādha Suddha Ēkādaśi, by the Mahāmaṇḍalēśwera Kōnapadēva Mahā Arasu during the reign of Sadāśiva.[74]

(2) Kārttika Punnama Festival :

This is celebrated on the Kārttika Pournima every year. The festival is called 'Kārttika Dīpōtsavam'. On this day *Akhaṇḍadīpa* is repalced by the new ones and the temple is illuminated with 'lamps'. The inscription of 1547 A.D. records the gift of money for providing eight offerings to Ahōbilēśwara of Lower Ahōbilam during the festival that comes on the 15th night in the Sukla Paksha of Kārttika.[75] This festival was celebrated by illuminating the temple with bright lamps collectively known as Kārttika Dīpāvaḷi and by offering special *Naivēdya* to the God.

(3) Śri Jayanti Festival :

This is the birth day of Narasimha Swamy that falls on the fourteenth day of the bright half of Vaisākha with 'Swāthi Nakshatram'. An epigraph of 1512 A.D. attesting this practice, says that one *Atirasapaḍi*, (Special offering) was made to the God Alagiya Singar abiding in Śrīnivāsapuram, a suburb of modern Tirupati, on the day of Śrī Jayanthi.[76]

(4) Vasanta Punnama Festival :

This was a popular festival celebrated in the temple during the Vijayanagara period. The inscription of 1507 A.D mentions the Vasanta Punnama as the Birth-Tithi of Singer (Narasimha Swamy) and the *Atirasapaḍi* was offered to the god on the birth-day.[77] Another inscription of 1530 A.D. states that on the day of Vasanta

pūṇima, Alagiya Śiṅgar of Śrīnivāspuram was offered special *Naivēdya* on the day of Vasanta Pūrnima after the *Tirumanjanam* (Sacred bath)[78]. The last inscription refers to the provision made for 'Tirumanjanam' to the God Aḷagiya Śinger by the Tāllapāka poets who lived in Tirupati in 15th -16th centuries A.D [79]

(5) Kshīrābdhi Festival

An epigraph of 1547 A.D states that a cash endowment was made for offerings to Vīra Narasimha of Ahōbilam during the *Kshīrābdhi* festival that falls on the *Kārtika Suddha Dwādaśi* day. [80]

(6) Vijayadaśami Festival :

This festival is referred to in an inscription of 1561 A.D. which states that a provision was made for offering to the God of Ahōbilam Narasimha and his consort Lakshmī on the day of Vijayadaśami festival.[81]

(7) Parvatithi Mahōtsavas :

These were celebrated on the day of festivals These are referred to in an inscription of 1561 A.D. from the village Arakativēmula in Anantapūr District.[82]

(8) Tirunakshatras of Āḷvars :

The birth starts of the twelve Ālvārs and of Śrī Rāmānujāchārya, the renowned Sri Vaishanava preceptor of 11th century A.D were celebrated in the Ahōbilam temple every month, according to the inscription of 1561 A.D [83]

(9) Garden Festivals :

These were probably *Vasanta-utsavas* celebrated in the month of (March-April) Chaitra, near a tank constructed by Van

Śaṭhagōpa jīyyar who gave a gift of land to Ahōbalēśwara of Lower Ahōbilam in 1564 A.D. for specific offerings and their distribution during these festivals.[84]

(10) Pañcha Parvas:

The 'Pañcha Parvas' or the five festivals, according to an inscription of 1564 A.D. were celebrated for the God of Upper Ahōbilam and the necessary provision was made for them by Parānkuśa Śrīman Śaṭhagōpa Jīyyangār of Ahōbilam.

(11) 220-Festival Days :

Here, it is interesting to note that 220-festival days were celebrated to the god of Lower Ahōbilam in a year. An undated epigraph from Lower Ahōbilam, records that the Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Sūrapa Ōbulayadēva Maṟārāja planted the Garuḍa stambha in the street opposite to the temple and made a cash endowment for providing offerings to Narasimha on the 220 festival days in the year on which the deity was brought in a procession and seated on the platform of the Garuda Stambha.[85] We also note a cash endowment made by Śrī Pāḍudaiyar in 1524 A.D.[86] for food offerings to Tiruvēṅgadamudaiyān (Sri Venkateswara) and Sri Govindaraja Swamy in Tirumala - Tirupati.[87] It is stated that the days selected for festivals in Tirumala were 222 in number. It is not exaggeration to celebrate 220 or 222 festivals either at Ahōbilam or at Tirumala, where there is a shrine for Narasimha within the temple of Sri Venkateswara and offerings made to Sri Venkateswara were also made to Yōga Narasimha on par with the Lord of the Seven Hills.

Thus, the temples are the important centres where different people get together to witness the ceremonies on the eve of festivals. The festivals and rituals, in fact promoted the growth of the cult, help for the spread and popularity of the cult of Narasimha particularly in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh.

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20. *Ibid.* S.No.235.
21. *SII,* Vol.XVI, S No.248
22. *Ibid.* No.261.
23. M.Vol. (SA) No.100, Ahōbilam Kaifiyat, p.16
24. *A Topographical list of the inscriptions of the Madras Presidency,* vol.I, Chittoor District, S No 19, p 475.
25. M.Vol. (SA) No.391-11, p 95-96.
26. *Vishnu Smrıti.* Chapter-65.
27. *Vaikhānasa Smārtasūtras,* IV-12.
28. *TTDER,* p.87.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Savah – Sorrow, Utu (udhrutah) is removed
31. Bhaskara Murthi, Donepudi, *Āgama Śılpa Sāstra Parichayamu,* p.73.
32. M.Vol (SA) No 391, pp.92.
33. *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for the year* 1938-39, Appendix-b, S.No.338, p.44.
34. *Śrīmannārāyana Saṁhita, Yagna Vaibhava Kaṇḍa,* Chap.VII, Slokas, 153-157.
35. *Ibid.*

36. *Sarvadēvata Pūja Vīdhānam,* Published by the Endowments Department, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderbad, pp.4-47.
37 *SII,* Vol X, No.737.
38 *Ibid,* S No.814.
39 *Ibid,* Vol . VI, No's 952 & 913
40. M.Vol (SA) No 251, p 122
41 *TTD I*, Vol III, S No 11.
42 *Annual Report on South Indian Ephigraphy* for the year 1938-39, Appendix-b, S.No.373, p 48.
43 *Ibid,* S.No.1173, M.Vol (SA), No.391 1, p.92
44 *SII,* Vol.VI, S No's 904 & 1190
45 Vijayaragavachārya, V, (Ed). *Cuddapah Inscriptions*, p 709
46 "Dharam Chamardinam Swarga Lōka Stūrlabhetu"
47 *Ibid,* S.No 310.
48 *TTDFR* p 38
49 *Annual Report on Indian Ephigraphy for 1965 66,* Appendix B, S No 10, p 38
50 *TTD I* Vol II No 101, p 211
51 *Ibid,* Vol IV, No.99, p.299
52 M Vol (SA) No.251, pp.108 III ("Bnōgam mēlamki, Vudigalu tolu Sahā Tāna mēlālu vāyimche vāriki")
53 *Ibid,* S No 310
54 *SII,* Vol. XVI, S No.299. & M Vol (SA), 100, Ahōbilam Kaifiyat, pp 17-19
55. M Vol. (SA) No.269, pp.142-144. Saka year 1466 Corresponds to 1544 A.D. and plavanga, the Telugu year during

the reign of Sadāśiva corresponds to 1547-48 A.D. A mixture of tamarinds in water with which copper or brass image are secoured This sacred function is known as "Pulikāpu Kainkaryam"

56. *T.T.D.I.* Vol.I, No 101, p.211
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Inscriptions of Āndhra Dēśa*, Vol.II, part I, Chittoor District, No.130, p 47.
59. *T.T.D.I* Vol.II, No.58.
60. *TTDER*, p. 23
61. M.Vol. (SA) No 132, p.27 (Vōnūtala and Vōgunūtala are one and the same).
62. M.Vol (SA) No.100, *Ahōbilam Kaifiyat*, p 7 & Sii, Vol XVI, S.No.53.
63. M.Vol. (SA) No.118, *Pottipādu grāmam Kaifiyat*, pp.109 & 111
64. Venkata Ramanayya, *N Cuddapah Inscriptions*, p 59, (Perumālla pārvēṭa Mahōtsava)
65. *T.T.D I*, Vol II, S No.76, pp 147
66. *Ibid*, Vol.III, S.No.11, p.42.
67. *Ibid*. Vol.VI, Part-I, S.No 76, pp 147
68. *SII*. Vol.X, S.No.577, lines 39 ff p.320.
69. M.Vol. (SA) No.391,I, pp.77-78
70. *TTDER*, p.20.
71. Sundaram, K., *The Śiṁhāchalam temple*, p.119
72. *Purushōttama Saṁhita*, Adh 27

73 M.Vol. (SA) No 272, pp.95-96

74 *Annual Report on Indian Ephigraphy, 192,* Anantapūr District, S No 318, p.18.

75 *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1914-15* Appendix-c, S No 58, p.62

76 *T.T.D I*, Vol III, S No 28, p 113

77 *Ibid,* Vol III, S No II, p,43.

78 Ibid, Vol.IV, No 3, p 9

79 *Ibid,* Vol.VI. Part-1, S No.160, p.237.

80 *SII,* Vol XVI, S No 159

81 M Vol (SA), No 251, p 111

82 *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1964-65* Appendix-B, S No 2, p.52

83 M.Vol (SA), No.251, pp.108-111

84 *SII,* Vol, XVI, S.No.263

85 M.Vol (SA), No 391-I, pp 77-78.

86 *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1915-16,* Appendix C-S No 76, p 65

87 Viraraghavachārya, TKT, *History of Tirupati,* Vol.II. p 658.

ICONOGRAPHY OF NARASIMHA

In iconography, Narasimha or Nṛsimha, one of the avatāras of Vishnu, is always represented in hybrid form. As the name itself indicates, it is a combination of Nara (Man) and Simha (Lion). This Man-Lion incarnation of Vishnu is more popular than the Varaha incarnation. In Tamil, the name is corrupted into Śiṅga (Sanskrit Śiṁha) or Śiṅga-Perumāḷ and in the other vernaculars into 'Narasa' (a contraction of Narasimha). The story of this incarnation of Vishnu given in the *Padma-purāṇa Vishnu purāṇa* etc., is briefly as follows:

Hiraṇyākasha and Hiranyakasipu were two demon brothers, naturally hostile to Vishnu. Hiraṇyākaśha was killed by Vishnu in his Varāha incarnation. Hiraṇyakaśipu then became the king of the demons and vowed eternal war with Vishnu. His young son Prahlāda, however, became a devoted adherent of Vishnu and was always praising him as the all-pervading lord of the universe. Exasperated with this, Hiranyakaśipu asked the young boy whether his god Vishnu, if he was all-pervasive, could found in the pillar in front of him; and then hacked at it with his sword. The pillar cleft in twain and out burst from it, to the astonishment of Hiraṇyakaśipu, the angry god in the form of a Man-Lion, who forthwith tore Hiraṇyakaśipu with the claws at the time of lingering twilight[1]

Images of Narasimha are of five different types with minor variations, namely *Giriją, Yōga Sthauna, Anugraha* and *Dēvīsahita*. Again they may be divided as *Sthānaka* (Standing), *Āsīna* (seated), *Yānaka* (riding) and *Nṛtya* (dancing)[2] All the

forms of Narasimha, mentioned above are found in the temples under study. An interesting feature of iconography of Narasimha is that in the early medieval sculptures, the lion face is natural and later on in the Vijayanagara period, it is stylized.

The iconographical features of the above said forms found in the temples under study are given below

1. Kēvala Narasimha (Standing)

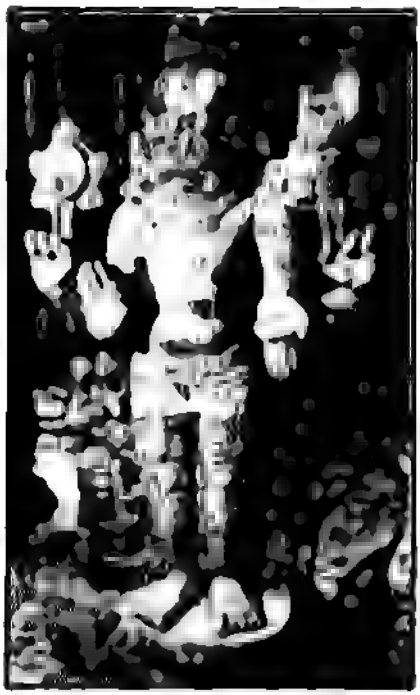
According to the *Vaikhānasa Āgama*, the single image of Narasimha has either two or four arms. In the four armed icon, the upper right hand holds *cakra* (disc) and the upper left holds *śankha* (conch). The front two arms rest on the knees.[3] According to the *Śilparatna* and *Padmasamhita*, the *śankha* and *cakra adorn* the two out-stretched hands and the other two hands hold the *gada* (mace) and the *padma* (lotus).[4]

No 1: The image of Kēvala Narasimha in the *garbhagriha* of Narasimhaswamy temple of Upper Ahōbilam is called Varāha (Krōdhākara) Narasimha Swamy. It is carved in black stone in the standing posture with a boar's mouth and the body of a man except the tail passing under the left knee. The deity has two arms, a wide mouth and open eyes with several ornaments on the waist. The image is of a frightful appearance.

The two-armed sculptures of Narasimha are found in the Pennahōbilam and Kadiri temples of Anantapūr District. The four armed Narasimha is on a pillar in the *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of Pennahōbilam temple, which is 1'-3" inches high, facing the east. These sculptures are specimens of the Vijayanagara sculptural art.

No.1 (Plate 3) The *Rangamaṇḍapa* in the Tirumala temple contains

a group of Dasāvatāra stone images of Vishnu. In this group, the god Narasimha is represented as standing in *samabhanga* with four arms. He holds *cakra* and *kankha* in the upper arms and keeps the lower right in *abhaya* and the lower left in *varada*. He has open eyes, thick mane, open mouth with sharp teeth and wears *kirītamakuta*, *yajñopavīta*, *hāra* girdle, *pūrnāruka* and *manjiras*.[8] This image is a product of the Vijayanagara art of 16th century A.D.



3. Kevala Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.

II. Girijā Narasimha (Āsīna or Seated)

The name 'Girijā Narasimha denotes that the lion comes out of a mountain cave.[6] In the Girijā Narasimha form, the god is to be shown seated upon a *'simhāsana* in *vīrāsana* The *Śilparatna* says that the seated image of Narasimha may have two or four hands. In the latter case, the god is to hold *cakra* and *śankha* in the two upper hands and keep the lower right in *abhaya* and the lower left at *kaṭi* or *gada* and *padma* in the lower right and lower left respectively. The *Padmapurāṇa* gives a vivid description of the deity thus - 'His face is that of a lion and the body of a human being. He has three eyes with a fierce face. He has four arms, holding a *cakra* in the upper right hand and a conch in the upper left hand and the other two lower hands rest on the knees.[7] The *'Vishnudharmōttara'* gives a similar form as in the *Padmapurāna* besides the hair being flamboyant [8] and the body being surrounded by flames.

No. 1: The image of Girijā Narasimha under a tree known as 'Karanja Vruksham' is found on the Upper Ahōbilam temple in the *padmāsana* posture The canopy of a Nāga hood on the head is like an umbrella. He has four arms and holds *cakra* in the upper right and *śankha* in the upper left arm. His two hands are stretched forward and supported on the knees. He has thick mane surrounding his neck stretching on the chest also. His ears stand erect He has three 'Nāmas' on the forehead. The image of the deity is in the meditation posture This image is locally known as Karanja Narasimha in Ahōbilam.

No. 2: In the lower Ahōbilam, there is also another image of Girijā Narasimha. The image is under a tree known as Chatravaṭa. The image is represented as seated in *padmāsana* on a pedestal. The image has four arms. The upper right holds *cakra* and the upper left *śaṅkha*. The lower right is in *abhaya* and the lower left arm is on his left thigh. He wears *kirīṭamakuṭa, hāras, yajñōpavīta, kaṭibandha*, bracelets and anklets. This deity is called 'Chatravaṭa Narasimha' in Ahōbilam.

No. 3: (Plate 2): In the Srivenkateswara temple of Tirumala, there is a sculpture of Narasimha represented in animal form as a lion on a pillar in the *dvajastaṁbha maṇṭapa*. He has the head of a lion and the tail is raised up behind and the body is that of a human being. He sits on a pedestal. He has only two arms. He supports his right arm with his palm on his chest, while the left arm is holding the penis which stands erect, with his fingers. This implies that he holds the sexual pleasures in control. He has thick mane around his head. He has protruding eyes, erected ears, puffed up cheeks and lolling tongue. This sculpture is a specimen of 15th century A.D. There are two more sculptures in animal representation on the pillars of the Yōga Narasimha shrine in the Sri Venkateswara temple of Tirumala.

2. Girijā Narasimha, Tirumala, 15th century A.D

No. 4 (Plate. 4): The *pavitrōstava maṇḍapa* in the Sri Venkateswara temple of Tirumala contains in one of its pillars a sculpture of Girijā Narasimha. This sculpture is about 10 inches in height. In this sculpture, the god is represented as seated on a pedestal in the *rājalīlāsana*. The god has four arms and holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper right and upper left respectively. His lower right arm is resting on the raised knee and the fingers hanging down and his lower left arm is resting on the pedestal. He has thick mane, bulging cheeks and open mouth. He wears a *makuṭa, hāra, udarabaṅdha, yagñōpavīta, kaṭibaṅdha,* and *pūrnōruka*. He also wears *armlets, wrislets, anklets* and *bhujakīrtis*. This sculpture is datable to the 16th century A.D.

4. Girijā Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D

The four-armed images of Girijā Narasimha are also found in the temples at Peddamudiyam in Cuḍḍapah District, Pennahōbilam and Kadiri in Anantapūr District, Tirumala in Chittoor District and Lower Ahōbilam and Upper Ahōbilam in Kurnool District.

No. 5 (Plate.5): The eight armed sculpture of Girijā Narasimha is found on a pillar in *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of the Sri Venkatesvara Temple of Tirumala. This is a very rare sculpture of Narasimha seated on a lion. He folds his left leg and the right foot hangs down in an *ardhaparyāṅka* posture. He has the face similar to that of a lion and eight arms. From the top on the right side, the uppermost arm holds a *cakra*, the next two arms have weapons, and the lowest

right arm is raised up in the *abhaya*. On the left side, the uppermost arm holds the *kankha* and the next two arms have some weapons and the lowest left arm is in *varada*. He has rolling eyes, erected ears, bulging cheeks and open mouth and wears ornaments like *makara*, *kanjamāla*, armlets, wristlets and anklets and locks hence. This is a rare sculpture, not normally seen elsewhere. This sculpture is of the Vijayanagara art of 16th century A.D.

1. Lanja Narasimha, Chennai, 16th century A.D.

III. Yōga-Narasimha:

In the Yōga-Narasimha form, the deity should be shown seated on a *padmāsana* in *utkutika* posture, the forelegs being maintained in the required position by the *yōga-paṭṭa* going round them and the back of the body.[9]

No.1: The sanctum of the Yōga Narasimha temple at Peddamuḍiyam, Cuḍḍapah district, contains a stone image of Yōga Narasimha. It is 2'-6" high with a Lion's head and a human body with four arms. He sits with crossed legs and raising his knees upright and supporting his feet on the pedestal on which he is seated and the *yōga-paṭṭa* belt passsing through the knees, maintains the legs in the required position He holds *śaṅkha* and *cakra* in his upper arms, his two lower arms are stretched forward and supported on the knees. He has a thick mane and hair on his head. He has bulging eyes, cheeks and a wide open mouth with the tongue protruding out. There are two prominent sharp tusks or teeth on both sides of the mouth. He has three 'Nāmas' on the forehead, a 'Sālagrāma māla' and wears bracelets and anklets.

No.2. There are two loose sculptures of Yōga Narasimha in the Yōga Narasimha temple at Peddamudiyam. These sculptures, on the basis of stylistic features, can be assigned to the 16th century A.D. Of them, in the first sculpture **(Plate 6)** the god is seated with legs crossed and holds *cakra* in the upper right hand, *śaṅkha* in the upper left and keeps the two lower hands stretched forward and supported on the knees. He has thick mane and wears a necklace, *kēyuras, kaṅkaṇas,* wristlets and anklets.

6. Yōga Narasimha, Peddamudiyam, 16th century A.D

No.3. (Plate 7): The god in the second sculpture is seated with the legs crossed and bound by a *yōga-patta* below the knees and has four hands. The contents in the upper hands, the postures of the lower hands and the ornaments are similar to the sculpture described above .

6. Yōga Narasimha, Peddamudiyam, 10th century A.D.

No.4. (Fig 2) The *garbhagriha* of the Narasimha shrine within the temple of Sri Venkateswara of Tirumala contains a four armed stone image of Yōga Narasimha. It is 3'-0" in the height, facing the west. He sits cross-legged on a pedestal, supporting his feet on it, raising his knees upright with the *yōga patta* belt passing round his knees. This image has *sankha* and *chakra* in the upper right and left hands respectively, while the lower hands rest on the knees with fingers hanging down. He has a mane around his neck. He has ornated

ears, open eyes, bulging cheeks and a wide open mouth with two prominent tusks. He wears a *makuṭa*, armlets, wristlets and anklets. The deity is in 'Saumya' form. This image betrays Vijayanagara workmanship and may be dated to the 15th century A.D

No.5. There is an image of Yōga Narasimha in the Sanctum of the Lower Ahōbilam temple. The deity sits in a cross-legged posture with the *yōga-paṭṭa* belt going round the knees. He is four-armed and resembles in every respect the image of S.NO.2 described above. He wears a lengthy *makuṭa* and a cloth to his waist.

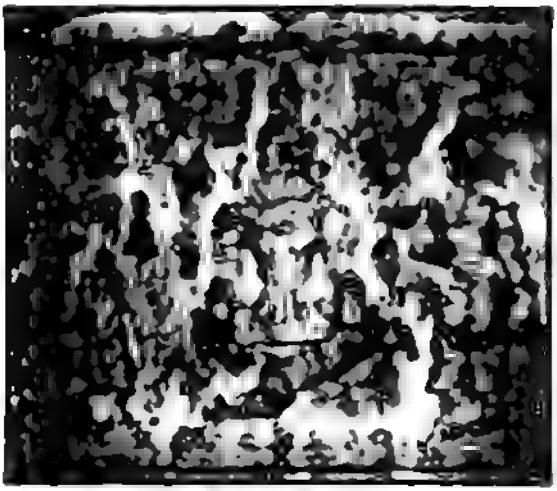
No.6 (plate 8): There is a four-armed sculpture of Yōga Narasimha on a pillar in the *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of the Sri Venkateswara temple of Tirumala. It is about one foot high, facing the north. In this sculpture, the god is in the *utkuṭika* posture with the *yōga-paṭṭa* belt passing round the knees. He has four arms. He carries *cakra* in the upper right, *saṅkha* in the upper left and the two lower hands are stretched forward over his knees. He has stylised mane, wide open eyes, protruberant cheeks and an open mouth. He is decorated with *kirīṭamakuta, hāras, yajñōpavīta, kaṭibandha, bhujakīrtis*, armlets, wristlets and anklets. He is in a calm yogic posture. This sculpture belongs to the 16th century A.D.

4. Vīṅga Narasiṁha, Tirumala, 11th century A.D.

No. 7 (Plate 9): The Lakshmī Narasiṁha *simple at Rudin*, Anantapur district, contains a one-of-the-kind four-armed sculpture of Vīṅga Narasiṁha. The iconographic features of this sculpture resembles in all respects the sculpture of Vīṅga Narasiṁha (No. 4) of Tirumala described above.

No. 8 (Plate 10). There is another unique four armed sculpture of Yōga Narasimha on a pillar in the Lakshmī Narasimha temple at Kadiri. Seated with the legs crossed, the god holds *cakra* in the upper right hand, *śankha* in the upper left and keeps the from two hands on the knees. He wears *kiriṭamakuṭa* and other ornaments. An interesting iconographic feature of this sculpture is that the deity is shown flanked by his two consorts Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī who are in the standing posture. The goddesses stand in *dvibhanga* and hold a flower in one hand and keep the other hanging. The above described two sculptures of Narasimha (**Plate Nos. 9 & 10**) are datable to the 15th century A.D

9. Yōga Narasimha, Kadiri, 15th century A.D



10 Yōga Narasimha, Kadiri, 15th century A.D.

No.9: There is yet another sculpture of Yōga Narasimha in the Lower Ahōbilam Temple in Kurnool District. This is found on a pillar and it is 2 feet in height, facing the north. In this example, the god is seated in the *utkuṭika* posture with the *yōga-paṭṭa* round the knees. He has four arms, holding *cakra* (broken) in his upper right and *śaṅkha* in his upper left arm. The two lower arms are stretched forward and are supported on the knees. He has stylised mane around his neck. He wears *kirīṭamakuṭa*, *nāmam*, a necklace, *udarabandha*, *yagnōpavīta*, armlets and rings on the fingers.

IV Sthauna Narasimha :

The word 'Sthauna' is derived from the word 'Sthuna' (stambha or pillar). As Narasimha came out of a pillar he is called 'Sthauna Narasimha'.[10] According to the *Vaikhānasāgama*, Sthauna Narasimha should stand in *tribhaṅga* and have twelve or

sixteen hands. On his left thigh Hiranyakaśipu should be stretched out with the belly being ripped open by two of the hands of Narasimha. One of the right hands should be in *abhaya* and another should carry a sword so as to make its point reach up to the *kuṇḍala* in the ear. One of the left hands of Narasimha should hold the *makuta* of Hiranyakasipu and other should be shown lifted up for administering a blow to the demon. The legs of asura are to be taken hold of by a right hand and two other hands, one right and one left should be lifted up to the ears of the image and holding the drawn out entrails of Hiranyakaśipu in the form of a garland. The figure of the god should be sculptured so as to indicate that he has been attempting to kill the demon and be armed with a sword and shield. If the figure of the deity is shown with only eight arms, two of them should be employed in tearing open the belly of Hiranyakasipu, while other four hands should carry *'saṅkha, gada, cakra* and *padma.* The remaining two hands should be holding the drawn out entrails of Hiranyakaśipu garland-wise.[11]

In the temples, a large number of sculptures represent either the combat between the god and the demon or killing of the latter by the former. In addition, as per the sculptures available in the temples, other representation is that of Narasimha shown as coming out of a column. The Sthauna Narasimha is shown in the temples in the following three stages.

(a) Staṁbōdbhava Narasimha.

(b) Narasimha Fighting the demon Hiranyakaśipu and

(c) Vidārana Narasimha (Narasimha killing the demon).

The description of 'Stambōdbhava Narasimha' is given in the Narasimha and Matsya Purāṇas, *Nārāyanīyam*, *Āndhra Bhāgavatham* of poet Pōtana and also in the Tamil hymns of Tirumangai Āḻvar[12] *Matsya Purāṇa* gives a vivid description of the second stage, the *god fighting* the demon with eight hands and the demon with a sword and the shield.[13]

Vidāraṇa Narasimha has been described in the *Vishnu Dharmōttara purāṇa* as tearing the bosom of Hiraṇya Kaśipu with sharp claws.[14]

Five stone images of Sthauna Narasimha are described below:

No. 1: The image of Sthauna Narasimha, about 2 feet in height, facing the east is in the Cave - garbhagriha of the Upper Ahōbilam temple. The god is seated in vīrāsana on a pedestal. The demon is lifted up and stretched across the god's lap. His head is placed on the right lap and legs on the left thigh of the god who has only two arms, holding the head of the demon with his right hand and the right thigh of the demon with his left hand. The god has open eyes, puffed-up cheeks and open mouth with curved teeth. He wears a round *makuta, yajñōpavīta* and a *sālagrāmamāla*. Below the demon, Prahlāda is standing. The image of the god exhibits the fierce aspect.

No. 2: The sanctum of Bhārgava Narasimha temple on the Upper Ahōbilam, contains an image of Sthauna Narasimha. It is carved on a black stone with *prabhāvali* on which the ten incarnations of Vishnu are sculptured out from right to left. The god is seated in *sukhāsana* on a pedestal. The demon is shown on the lap of the god and the head of the demon is placed on the right thigh. The god has four hands, holding *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in his upper right and left hands

respectively. While his lower hands are engaged in tearing open the stomach of the demon. The demon holds a sword in his right hand which is held by the right leg of the god. Below the left thigh of the god is Prahlāda standing in *anjali*. This image is popularly called 'Bhārgava Narasimha'.

No. 3: Another image which is 4 ft. high is in the garbhagriha of the Ugra Narasimha temple at Peddamudiyam in Cuddapha Dirstrict. It is carved on a black stone along with *prabhāvali* on which ten incarnations of Vishnu are sculptured from right to left. The god sits on a pedestal in *ardhaparyānkāsana*. The demon is on the lap of the god. The head of the demon is kept on the left thigh of the god and his legs are dangling free form the knees. The god has eight arms. His upper most arms hold the intestines of the demon in the form of garland, the next pair of arms hold *cakra* and *śankha* and the third pair has a sword and a shield in the right and left arms respectively. The last two arms are engaged in opening the stomach of the demon. The god has thick mane, rolling eyes, bulging cheeks and wide open mouth with two prominent canine teeth. He wears several ornaments. The demon holds a sheild in his left arm and a sword in his right arm in striking posture. The god looks fierce.

No. 4: Yet another image of Sthauna Narasimha is in the sanctum of the Lakshmī Narasimha temple at Kadiri in Anantapūr district. It is also 2 ft. high, facing the east. The god sits on a pedestal crossing his feet and resting his toes on the same pedestal. The demon is shown horizontally across the lap of the god. The head of the demon is placed on the right thigh and the legs on the left lap of the god who is shown in action of tearing out the entrails of the demon with his

finger-nails. The god has eight arms. In the right arms, from top, there are *cakra* and sword in the first two hands and *śaṅkha* and a shield in the first two left arms respectively. His third right arm holds the head of demon and the left holds the two legs of the demon. The last two arms with finger-nails are involved in the act of rending the entrails of the demon. The god has mane around the neck, open eyes, bulging cheeks, erected ears, lolling tongue and moustache. He is adorned with *nāmas*, a tall *kirīṭamakuṭa, yajñōpavīta, udarabandha* and *hāras*. An inscription, dated in 1352 A.D. states the Lakshmī Narasimha temple of Kadiri was built by a Nāyaka in that year. Hence, this image of Sthauna Narashimha may well be taken to belong to the 14th century. A.D

No. 5: A small natural mountain - cave contains 3' high stone sculpture of Sthauna Narasimha (Jvāla Narasimhaswamy) on Upper Ahōbilam. The god has ten arms and is in the *sukhāsana* pose with his left leg folded and the right leg hanging down freely. His upper arms hold *cakra* and *śaṅkha*. Two arms hold the demon, Hiraṇyakaśipu. Other hands are holding and also tearing out the intestines of the demon. The devotee, Prahlāda is in the *aṅjalihasta* pose to the right side.

The pillar sculputres of (a) Stambōdbhava Narasimha (b) God fighting the demon, Hiraṇyakaśipu and (c) Vidāraṇa Narasimha are described below:

(A) Stambōdbhava Narasimha:

No.1: On a pillar in the *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of Lakshmī Narasimha temple at Pennahōbilam in Anantapur district, there is the sculpture of Stambōdbhava Narasimha, one foot tall facing the north. The

god is represented as coming out of the pillar. His body can be seen only upto the waist. He has four arms and holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper arms and his two lower arms rest on the pillar. The god has mane around his neck, bulging eyes and cheeks. He is adorned with a round *karīṭamakuṭa,* a necklace, a *hāra* and *udarabandha.* To his left, the demon is found kicking the pillar with his left leg. He holds a sword in his right arm in a striking posture and a shield in his left arm. The god looks frightful. Prahlāda stands in *'añjalimudra'* to his right under the lower arm of the deity.

No. 2 (Plate 11): The sculpture of Stambōdbhava Narasimha is also found on a central pillar to the left of the *mukhamaṇḍapa* of the Lakshmī shrine within the Narasimha temple at Kadiri in Anantapūr district. This sculpture is one foot high. The god is shown as coming out of the pillar, exposing only the left part of his body he comes forward outstretching his left leg towards the demon. The god has probably eight arms, but the left four arms are distinct. He holds certain deadly weapons in his upper three arms and in the last arm i.e. the front arm is hanging down obliquely with the fingers projecting down. To the left of the god, Prahlāda is standing with folded hands. To the extreme left of the god, beside Prahlāda, the demon is standing with outstretched sword in his right arm. The god has thick mane, protruding eyes, bulging cheeks and wide open mouth. He wears a pointed *makuṭa, kaṭibandha* and piece of cloth on his waist. The deity looks in *ugra-rūpa.* This sculpture belongs to the early Vijayanagara art of 15th century A.D.

11 Stambōdbhava Narasimha, Kadiri, 15th century A.D.

No.3. (Plate 12): Another sculptur of Stambōdbhava Narasimha is found at Ahōbilam. Narasimha has the human body and the face of a lion and is shown coming out of the pillar. He has four arms and holds *cakra* in the upper right are and *śankha* in the upper left. The lower arms are shown clasped together below the girdle. He wears *kirīṭamakuta, yajñōpavīta, kaṅkaṇas* and girdle. This sculpture is a specimen of the Vijayanagara sculptural art of 16th century A.D.

12. Stambōdbhava Narasimha,
Lower Ahōbilam 16th century A.D.

No. 4 (Plate 13): Yet another sculpture of Stambōdbhava Narasimha is found on a pillar in the *mandapa* to the north of the *pushkariṇi* (tank) of the *kapilēśvara* temple at the foot of the Tirumala Hills. The iconographic features of this sculpture resembles in all respects the sculpture (No.3) of Stambōdbhava Narasimha of Ahōbilam described above. This sculpture is a specimen of the Vijayanagara art of 16th century A.D.

13.Stambōdbhava Narasimhma, Kapilatīrtham, 16th century A.D.

B. Narasimha Fighting the Demon Hiranyakaśipu

The sculptures of Narasimha fighting the demon Hiranyakasipu are described below. In this type of representation, the god is represented with four, six and eight arms in the sculptures.

No.1 (Plate 14): The four armed sculpture of Narasimha fighting the demon is found in the temple at Upper Ahōbilam It is about 1'.6" in height. The god holds *cakra* in the upper right arm and *śaṅkha* in the upper left arm. He holds the *makuṭa* of the demon in his lower right arm and the lower left holds the waist of the demon. The god and the demon are standing and the right leg of god is interlocked with that of the right leg of the demon. The demon holds a shield in his left arm and holds a sword in his right arm. The god has thick mane, protruding eyes, a wide open mouth and puffed-up cheeks with a fierce look

14. Narasimha Fighting the Demon Hiranyakaśipu, Upper Ahōbilam, 16th century A.D

No.2 (Plate 15): A pillar in the Rangamandapa of the Tirumala temple contains a sculpture of Narasimha fighting the demon. This sculpture depicts a hand to hand fight between the god and demon in the standing position. The god has four arms. His back arms are raised up in a striking position, while his front right arm is holding the waist of the demon and the left holds the *makuta* of the demon. The god places his left leg in between the legs of the demon, obstructing the movement of the demon's left leg. The demon looks back in desparation. The god has thick mane, bulging eyes, girdle and anklets. Two sculptures of this type are found on the pillars in the temple of Narasimha at Lower Ahōbilam and another sculpture is found carved on a pillar infront of the entrance of the Narasimha temple at Pennahōbilam in Anantapūr district. This sculpture is assignable to the 16th century A.D [15]

15 Narasimha, Fighting the Demon Hiranyakasipu, Tirumala, 16th century A D

No. 3. The six armed sculpture is found on a pillar in the *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of the Tirumala temple It is 1' 3" This sculpture depicts the god fighting with the demon, face to face

No.4. (Plate 16): The eight armed sculpture of god fighting the demon is found on a pillar in the *makhamaṇḍapa* of the Ugra Narasimha temple at Peddamudiyam in Cuddapah district. It is 1' 3" in height, facing the south This sculpture belongs to the Vijayanagara period, about 15th century A.D

16. Narasimha Fighting the Demon Hiranyakaśipu, Peddamudiyam, 15th century A.D.

C. Vidārana Narsimha (Narasimha Killing the Demon)

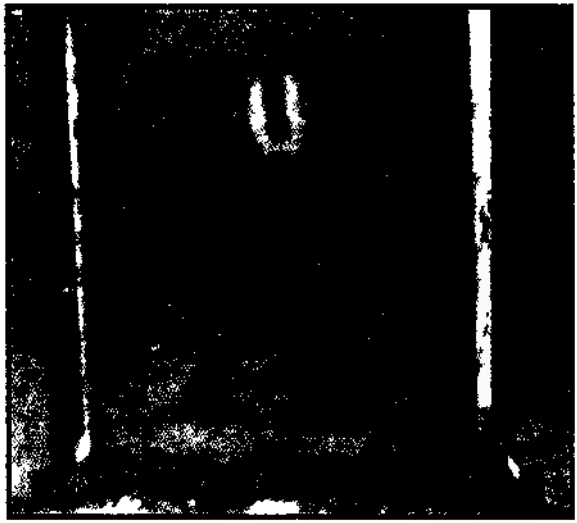
The six armed sculptures of Vidārana Narasimha are found at Peddamudiyam (Yōga Narasimha Temple) in Cuddapah district, in the Narasimha temple at Pennahōbilam in Anantapūr district and in the Tirumala temple in Chittoor district.

No.1: Eight armed sculptures of Vidāraṇa Narasiṃha are five in number. The first is on a pillar, beside the central four pillared *maṇḍapa*, towards left in the *Raṅgamaṇḍapa* of the Lower Ahōbilam temple. It is 2 ft. in height. The god sits on a pedestal.

The demon is shown horizontally across the god's lap. The god has eight arms. The upper most arms hold the drawn out entrails of the demon in a garland shape. The next two arms hold *cakra* and *śaṅkha* and the third *row* of right arms is in action opening the stomach of the demon. The last right arms holds the *makuṭa* of the demon and the other two legs of the demon together The god has his usual terrific features. The god wears a number of ornaments. At the feet of the god, is Garuda kneeling with raised arms to support the feet of the god. Prahlāda stands in the *añjalimudra* below the right knee of the god

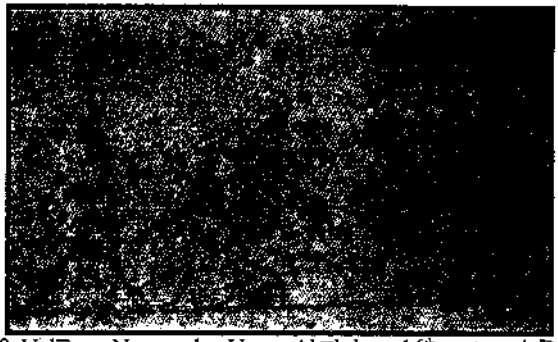
The four other eight armed sculptures of Vidāraṇa Narasimha, are found at Peddamudyam (Ugra Narasimha Temple) in Cuddapah district, Kadiri in Anantapur District, Tirumala in Chittoor district and Upper Ahōbilam in Kurnool District.

No.2 (Plate 17): The Varāha shrine at Tirumala contains on its outer wall an eight armed sculpture of Vidāraṇa Narasimha. The deity is in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana*. The demon is placed horizontally across the gods lap The head of the demon is kept on the left lap of the god and the legs of the demon stretched straight on the right thigh of the god The god has eight hands. The upper most hands hold the drawn out entrails of the demon in the form of a garland The next two hands are lifted up and the third pair of hands is holding the leg and the *makuṭa* of the demon The first two hands are shown opening the stomach of the demon. The god has protruding eyes, puffed-up cheeks He wears *makuṭa* and several ornaments. This sculpture is datable to 16th century A.D



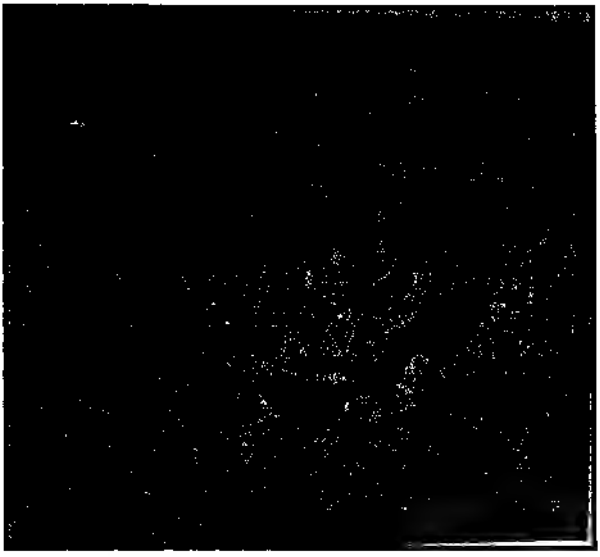
17. Vidāraṇa Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.

No.3 (Plate 18): In the temple of Upper Ahōbilam, Vidāraṇa Narasimha is shown in two stages In the first stage, Narasimha and Hiraṇyakaśipu are shown engaged in fighting. Narasimha has four hands. He holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper hands and catches Hiraṇyakaśipu with the other two hands Another demon is shown standing with sword, shield in his hands, to the right side of Hiraṇyakaśipu, and in the second stage, Narasimha is shown tearing open the stomach of Hiraṇyakaśipu. He seated in *vīrāsana* keeping Hiraṇyakaśipu on his thighs He has eight hands and opens the stomach of Hiraṇyakaśipu with the front two hands The uppermost hands hold the entrails of the demon in the form of a garland. The next pair of hands carry *cakra* and *śaṅkha* and the third pair of hands hold the legs and the *makuṭa* of the demon. This sculpture belongs to 16th centurey A.D.



18. Vidārana Narasimha, Upper Ahōbilam, 16th century A.D

No. 4 (Plate 19): There is a sixteen armed sculpture of Vidārana Narasimha on a pillar in the *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirumala. The god sits in the *'ardhaparyānka'* posture. The demon is stretched across the lap of the god. His head is placed on the right lap of the god. The god has sixteen hands. He holds out the entrails in his upper most arms in the form of a garland. The second pair of arms, from the top, is raised in striking posture. The next two arms hold *cakra* and *śaṅkha*. Fourth and fifth pair of arms hold the *kārṭamakuṭas* of couple of demons who are attacking the demon. The sixth pair of arms is holding a sword and shield. The seventh right arm holds the *makuta* of the demon Hiranyakaśipu and the left, the legs of the demon together. The last pair of arms i.e the front two arms are shown ripping open the bosom of the demon. The god has thick mane and protruding eyes and bulging cheeks, which gives him fierce look. He wears a number of ornaments. This is a rare sculpture depicting the ferocious (Ugra) form Narasimha. This sculpture is a specimen of the Vijayanagara art of 16th century A.D.



19. Vidārana Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D

V. Lakshmī Narasimha :

The form of Sri Lakshmī Narasimha has been vividly described in *Skanda Purāṇa,*[16] *Nāradīya Mahapurāna*[17] and *Rūpadhyāna Ratnavāḷi,*[18] as seated with his consort Lakshmī in his lap. The latter text says that "He is embraced by his consort, Lakshmi. He has four hands. He holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in his upper right and upper left hands respectively. While his lower right hand is in *abhaya* and the lower left is in *varada* posture.

The images and sculptures of Lakshmi Narasimha are found at Gooty and Pennahōbilam in Anantapūr district, Ahōbilam in Kurnōol district and Kapilatīrtham at the foot of Tirumala Hills in Chittoor district. They are described below.

No.1: (Plate 20) The *garbhagṛiha* of Lakshmī Narasimha swamy temple on the hill at Gooty in Anantapūr district contains an image of Lakshmī Narasimha. It is 2^{1}-6" high facing the east. The god has the conopy of a five headed Naga, like an umbralla and nimbus behind his head. The god sits in *lalitāsana* and has four arms, holding *cakra* and *śankha* in his upper right and left respectively, while his lower right is in *abhaya* and the lower left is taken round the waist of Lakshmī. He has open eyes, bulging cheeks and a wide open mouth. The god and his consort wear *makuṭas* and several ornaments. Since the image of Lakshmī Narasimha is said to have been consecrated by King Bukka (1344-77 A.D.), it can be dated to belong to the 14th century A.D.

20 Lakshmī Narasimha, Gutti, 14th century A.D.

No.21 (Plate 21): There is another image in the sanctum of Lakshmī Narasimha temple at Punnaikkulam in Anantapur district. It is 5 feet high, facing the east in the sitting posture. The sitting posture, face, the ornaments and hand positions are similar to S.No.1. According to tradition, the Lakshmī Narasimha temple was built by Aliya Rāmarāya, son-in-law of Krishnarāya. The image of Lakshmī Narasimha may be dated to the 16th century A.D.

21. Lakshmī Narasimha, Punnaikkulam, 16th century A.D.

No.3: The four feet tall Lakshmī Narasimha image facing the east, is in the *garbhagriha* of the Lower Ahōbilam temple It is carved on a black stone along with *prabhāvaḷi*. Over the head of the god, is a seven-headed Adisesha, like an umbrealla. The deity is in the *'lalitāsana'* with four arms which are similar to S No 1. Lakshmī is seated with legs hanging down freely, on the left folded leg of the god. The god wears *kirīṭamakuṭa* necklaces and *hāras* So is his consort in her ornaments. This image is of the Vijayanagara period, about 16th century A D.

No.4: There is a Lakshmī Narasimha sculpture in the *garbhagriha* of Malōla Narasimha shrine on the Upper Ahōbilam The god is in *lalitāsana*, with four arms which are similar to No 2 He wears a pointed *makuṭa a hāra*, bracelets and anklets

No.5: There is also another image in the sanctum of Pavana Narasimha temple on the Upper Ahōbilam This is also in the *lalitāsana* on the coils of Adisēsha, with four arms which are similar to the No 1 except the lower left arm which is taken round the back of his consort and supporting on her left arm

No.6 (Plate. 22): The cave shaped shrine in the Kapilēśvara temple at Kapilatīrtham at the foot of Tirumala Hills, contains an image of Lakshmī Narasimha of 16th century A.D. The god is seated on a *pīṭha* with his right leg hanging and the left leg folded at the knee and resting on the seat. He has four arms of which the upper right arm is broken He holds *śaṅkha* in the upper left arm, keeps the lower right arm in *abhaya* and the lower left passes round the back his consort Lakshmī He wears a *makuṭa* and several other ornaments. Lakshmī is seated on the left thigh of the god with her

legs resting on a seat below. She holds a lotus in her left arm and passes her right arm round the back of the god. She wears *karaṇḍamakuṭa, kucabandha* and *pūrṇōruka*.[19] This image, is a product of 16th century A.D.

22. Lakshmī Narasimha, Kapilatīrtham, 16th century A.D.

No. 7 (Plate 23): One of the pillars in the *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of the Sri Venkateswara temple of Tirumala contains a sculpture of Lakshmī Narasimha. The god and the goddess have four and two arms respectively. This sculpture resembles in all respects the sculpture of Lakshmī Narasimha described above.

23. Lakshmī Narasimha, Tirumala, 16th century A.D.

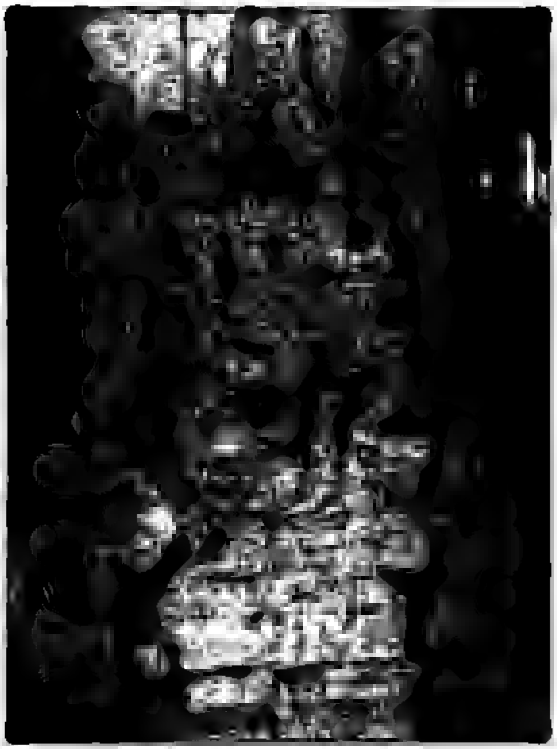
VII. Yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha :

No.1: In this sculptural representation, the combination of 'yōga' and 'bhōga' (seated Lakshmī on the lap) is very rare. This very rare sculpture is found on a pillar beside the central four pillared *mandapa,* to the left in the *Raṅgamaṇḍapa* of Lower Ahōbilam temple, showing the 'Yōga' and 'Bhōga' (with Lakshmī on the lap) aspects of the god This sculpture is about 11 -6" and faces the east. The god sits on the coils of Adisēsha. The *yōga-paṭṭa* belt runs from the knees to the waist, maintaining his legs in the required position. The god has four arms. His upper right arm is broken and his upper left holds an arrow and bow. The lower right is in *abhaya* and the lower left passes round the hip of Lakshmī The absence of *karīṭamakuṭa* is the conspicuous feature here The god and Lakshmī wear a number of ornaments This sculpture is a specimen of the Vijayanagara sculptural art of 16th century A.D

VIII. Varāha Lakshmī Narasimha

No.1 (Plate. 24) This is also another rare type of image of Narasimha with the mouth of a boar or Varāha described as 'Bhūvaraha' in the iconographic texts. This is found on a pillar beside the central four-pillared *mandapa* in the Lower Ahōbilam temple It is 21-6" high, facing the north. The god has the face of a 'krodha' (Varāha or Boar). He sits in the *lalitāsana.* His consort Lakshmī is seated on the left lap of the god with her legs hanging down The god has four arms, holding *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in his upper right and left arms respectively The lower right is *abhaya* and the lower left passes round the back of Lakshmī. There are three *Nāmas* on the forehead. The god and goddess wear several ornaments This image, is a product of florid Vijayanagara art of 16th century A.D.

No.2: There is another Vīrā Lakshmī Narasimha sculpture on a pillar in the first mukhamandapa of the Mahanasa temple on Upper Ahōbilam. It is similar to No. 1 described above and is an example of the Vijayanagara art of 15th century A.D.



24. Vīrā Lakshmī Narasimha,
Lower Ahōbilam, 16th century A.D.

IX. Prahlādanugrahamūrti :

No.1: The god Narasimha blessing Prahlāda with his hand is known as 'Prahlādanugrahamūrti'. This type of images are rare and has no sanction of the Āgama Sāstras. One example of Prahlādanugrahamūrti is described below. This is found on the second pillar, on the left side in the *kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of the Pennahōbilam temple of Anantapūr district. It is one foot in height and has two arms. The god is standing on a pedestal with his right arm hanging down and the left arm resting (blessing) on the head of Prahlāda who is standing with folded hands on the same pedestal. The god has the head of the a lion without *makuṭa*. This sculpture is of 16th century A.D.

X Narasimha Wooing Chēnchita (Plate.25) :

The representation of Narasimha with Chēnchita (a Chēnchu tribe woman) also has no Āgama sanction. But there are three sculptures of god Narasimha wooing Chēnchita. These belong to florid Vijayanagara art of 16th century A.D.

No.1: One of the pillars of the *mukhamaṇḍapa* of Ugra Narasimha temple in Peddamudiyam of Cuddapah district, contains a sculpture of Narasimha wooing Chēnchita. This sculpture is 11-3" in height. The god is in the wooing posture with Chenchita, who is standing beside him. The god holds a bow in the right arm, while the left arm rests on the waist. The face of Chēnchita is broken completely.

No.2: Another sculpture of Narasimha wooing Chēnchita is found on a pillar in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* of the Upper Ahōbilam temple. It is one foot in height and is similar to No.1. Chēnchita bends at the waist to the right side. Both the god and Chēnchita hold bows in their left and right arms and wear several ornaments.

25. Narasimha wooing Chenchita,
Lower Abhisham, 16th century A.D.

No.3 (Plate. 25): The third example is found on a pillar in the Rangamandapa at Lower Abhisham. It is 2 in height, facing the east. The god is shown begging Chenchita who is in an angry mood. The god has four arms and holds cakra and lookha in the upper

arms. The lower right hand is touching her chin with his palm entreating her earnestly and the other hand passes round her and rests on the lower part of her breast. She has a bow in her left hand. Her left leg is bent and supports her toes on the ground and raising her ankle. The god and Chēnchita wear a number of ornaments. Chēnchita looks angry and is adamant towards the god.

A survey of the temples of Narasimha under study reveals that the various forms of Narasimha namely Kēvala, Girijā, Yōga, Sthauna and Lakshmī Narasimha have been well represented iconographically. Even the other forms of Narasimha such as Prahlādanugrahamūrti, Yōgānanda Narasimha, Varāha Lakshmī Narasimha and Narasimha wooing Chēnchita which are not mentioned in the Āgama sastras are also well depicted in the temples under study. Again, during the period of study, in general, the form of Lakshmī Narasimha was more popular than the other forms of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. Further, the study of the iconographic features of various forms of Narasimha reveals that in the above mentioned varieties, majority of the sculptures of Narasimha conform to the iconographic texts while the rest partially differ from the requirements of the texts. This shows that the sculptors did not strictly adhere to the requirements of the texts.

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CONCLUSION

The Narasimha cult is related to the fourth incarnation of Vishnu. This cult is an important and popular one throughout Andhra Pradesh. It has a special place in the cultural history of Rāyalaseema. Traditions of Narasimha cult are best seen today at Ahōbilam, Pennahōbilam, Kadiri, Gutti, Peddamudiyam, Tangoṇḍa, Tirumala and other centres in Rāyalaseema. Many in Rāyalaseema carry the names of Ahōbilam, Pennalōbilam or Kadiri and the cult has tremendously influenced the social life of the region. In Rāyalaseema, there are eighty eight temples dedicated to Narasimha of which forty four are referred to in the inscriptions. The inscriptions help us to trace out the growth of the cult and significance of the select temples of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

Narasimha incarnation of Vishnu is considered to be a 'Divyāvatāra' in comparision to the earlier incarnations of Vishnu i e Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha. The Narasimaha incarnation is an anthropomorphic form, combining the Man - Lion features. The study of images and sculptures of Narasimha shows that god Narasimha was regarded as one of the most favourite incarnations of Vishnu in the four districts of Rāyalaseema. Here god Narasimaha occupies the position of a cult deity rather than remaining merely an incarnation of Vishnu. There are certain *bījāksharas* (seed words), *stavas* and *mantrās* with which the god is worshipped and invoked. Besides, certain tantric procedure plays an important role in the worship of this deity. There is a strong belief among the devotees that if the god is worshipped and invoked in accordance

with the Tantric procedure uttering seed words, *stavas* and *mantrās* with sincere and constant devotion, the god showers favours upon the devotees. He is worshipped in particular to cure the diseases, destroy the enemies, protect from the evil spirits and save the devotees from all sorts of calamities. As a mark of heart - felt devotion and dedication to this god, it is seen from some inscriptions that some people give the name of the god and of His *kshētra* to their children to gain His favour and blessings, a practice followed to this day. When this god is worshipped throughout the land, the worship becomes a cult, like that of Sri Venkatesvara of Tirumala.

The origin, antiquity and growth of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema is tapped from archaeological and literary sources, including the *sthalapurānas* and traditions. Comparatively, there are fewer grants in the early period (12th and 13th centuries A.D.) of our study and as we go on to the later period i.e. the Vijayanagara period, there are a number of grants made to the temples of Narasimha by the ruling dynasties. The third chapter shows by analysing the available material, how the cult of Narasimha had slowly and steadily grown from the 12th century A.D. to the 17th century A.D. It is to be noted during these centuries, Narasimha cult was prevalent in the four districts i.e. in Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapūr and Chittoor districts of Rāyalaseema.

The antiquity of the Narasimha cult in Rāyalaseema goes back to the 5th - 6th century A.D. as evidenced by the rare sculptured panel of nine deities along with Vishnu as Narasimha (Man - lion) at **Peddamudiyam (plate No. 1)** in Cuddapah district of Rāyalaseema.[1]. In this panel, there is a representation of nine deities

including Narasimha which is third in order from the left. This panel shows Narasimha as standing in *samabhanga* with only two arms in *kati-hasta* posture. He wears a *makuta, yajnopavita,* and *purnoruka* and has erected ears, round eyes and open mouth. This panel represents the earliest iconography of Narasimha which existed in 5th - 6th century in Rayalaseema. From 5th - 6th century A.D. to 11th century A.D., the authentic information to reconstruct the history of the cult of Narshimha in Rayalaseema is scanty. But from 12th century onwards, we have sufficient epigraphic evidence to trace out the growth of the cult of Narasimha in Rayalaseema. The cult of Narasimha had made a steady beginning of growth in 12th century. It was patronised by the Western Chalukyas (973 - 1198. A.D.) and their feudatories. The earliest known inscription of 12th century is of 1124 A.D from Peddamudiyam during the reign of the Western Chalukya king Tribhuvana malladeva.[2]. During the rule of the Western Chalukyas, the cult of Narasimha received patronage in the areas corresponding to the present Cuddapah and Kurnool districts in Rayalaseema. The Hoysalas (1100-1342 A.D.) and Yadavas (1187 - 1312 A.D.) had also contributed their patronisation of cult during 12th and 13th centuries respectively. Their inscriptions found at Jeelavaripalli of Cuddapah district and Chinna Tumbalam in Kurnool district testify their patronage.[3]

The Kakatiyas of Warangal (1000-1323 A.D.) heralded a new era in the history of Andhra Pradesh, protecting the kingdom from the onslaughts of muslims and patronising art and letters. Though the Kakatiyas are said to have leaning towards Saivism, they were tolerant of other faiths and sects of Hinduism. Among the Kakatiyas,

Pratāparudra (1295 - 1323 AD) supported the growth of this cult and the temple of Ahōbilam was the centre of Narasimha worship patronised by him[4] From 12th century to the end of the Kākatīyas of Warangal, the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema developed slowly and steadily. From 1324 A.D to 17th century AD, the cult of Narasimha spread by leaps and bounds During this period, the cult was patronised by different dynasties that ruled over Rāyalaseema. They were the Reddys of Koṇḍavīḍu and Rājahmundry, the Rāyas of Vijayanagara and their feudatory family, the Nandyāla chiefs who enriched the temple of Ahōbilam by their munificient grants. The Reddys of Koṇḍavīḍu and Rājamahēndravaram were sincere devotees of god Narasimha and a number of their liberal grants to the temple of Ahōbilam supports this view.[5]

The rule of Rāyas of Vijayanagara (1336 - 1680 A D.) heralded a new era in the annals of Rāyalaseema The kings of Vijayanagara were patrons and saviours of Hindu dharma. The period of Vijayanagara kings (14th to 17th century AD) witnessed considerable growth of the cult of Narasimha and its popularity in Rāyalaseema. From the second part of the 14th century to the first half of 17th century, under the fervent patronisation of the Rāyas of Vijayanagara, the cult had grown in popularity by leaps and bounds. King Harihara II, Sāḷuva Narasimha, (1456 - 1490 A.D) Krishnadēvarāya, (1509 - 1529 A.D) Achyutarāya, (1529 - 1542 A.D.) Sadāśivarāya (1542 1576 A.D) and Śrī Ranga - I (1572 - 1585 A.D) seem to be the strong supporters of Srivaishanavism, though they encouraged other sects of Hinduism. King Harihara-II

(1377 - 1404 A.D.) struck coins with the emblem of Lakshmī Narasimha.[6] Another king Sāḷuva Narasimha states in the introduction to his work 'Rāmābhudayam' that he was born by the grace of god Narasimha of Ahōbilam.[7] The cult of Narasimha was on increase from the reign of Krishṇadēvarāya to the reign of Sadāsiva. Krishṇadēvarāya was a staunch supporter of Vaishnavism, known from his grants given to the temples, dedicated to god Vishnu Ahōbilam, the centre of Narasimha worship was the major recipient from the treasury of Krishnadēvarāya [8] Achyutarāya struck the coins with the emblem of 'Gaṇḍabhērunḍa' which is said to be an aspect of god Narasimha.[9] The reign of king Sadāsiva is a land mark and epoch - making in the history of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema, because there are more than fifty grants made to the temples of Narasimha.[10] His reign was favorable for the growth and popularity of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. In addition to these kings, other kings Bukka I[11], Dēvarāya-II[12], (1422-1446 A D) Mallikārjuna[13] (1447-1465A.D) and Venkatapatirāya-II[14] (1585-1614 A D) had patronised the temples of Narasimha. Besides, there are several grants made to the temples of Narasimha by private individuals which cover the period from 1404 AD to 1636 AD [15] Among all the dynasties, it is the Vijayanagara which made the maximum number of grants to the temples of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. During the glorious period of the Vijayanagara kings, the cult has spread to all the four districts of Rāyalaseema. The following are the twenty-five centres of Narasimha worship patronised by the Vijayanag kings in Rāyalaseema.

KURNOOL DISTRICT

1. Ahōbilam
2 Būdūru

CUDDAPAH DISTRICT

3. Vōnūtula (Vogunutala)
4. Gaṇḍikōta
5. Bōmmavaram
6. Pōttipāḍu
7 Kailuṭla
8. Irmakaḷlu
9. Periavaram
10. Peddamuḍiyam
11. Mōṭakaṭla
12 Timma Nāyanipēta.

ANANTAPŪR DISTRICT

13. Kadiri
14 Gutti (Gooty)
15. Hiriya Dhalivate
16. Chāgalēru
17. Dharmavaram
18. Pennahōbilam
19 Yaḍlapalli
20 Uravakoṇḍa
21. Penugoṇḍa

CHITTOOR DISTRICT

22 Tirumala

23 Kapilatīrtham

24. Srinivāsapuram-(suburb of Tirupati).

25 Tangoṇḍa

The above stated centres testify to the popularity of the cult of Narasimha during the period of study. Of the above stated centres, Ahōbilam in Kurnool district, Kadiri and Pennahōbilam in Anantapur district emerged as the major centres of Narasimha worship in Rāyalaseema. Among these major centres, Ahōbilam again stands first in the patronisation by various dynasties. This temple grew in popularity during the Vijayanagar period only. In the history of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema, the association of god Narasimha with a Chēnchu woman is an interesting and thought provoking matter. The Chēnchus, one of the aboriginal tribes of Rāyalaseema, claim that Narasimha is their god who had married Chēnchita, a woman of their tribe. The association of Chēnchita with god Narasimha goes back to 1354 A.D which is the earliest known sculptural evidence of Chēnchu tribe found so for in Rāyalaseema. The sculptures of god Narasimha and Chēnchita at lower Ahōbilam, Upper Ahōbilam and at Ugra Narasimha temple at Peddamudiyam speak in unmistakable terms the association of god Narasimha with Chēnchita. The Chēnchus claim that god Narasimha is their brother-in-law since the god married a woman of their tribe. The Chēnchus enjoy certain privileges even now in the temple at Ahōbilam in Kurnōol district.

Following are the extant major centres of Narasimha worship in the four districts of Rāyalaseema.

S.No.	Name of the centre	Taluk and District
1	Ahōbilam	Āḷḷagaḍḍa Taluk, Kurnool district
2.	Kadiri	Kadiri Taluk, Anantapūr district
3.	Gutti (Gooty)	Gutti Taluk, Anantapūr district
4.	Pennahōbilam	Uravakoṇḍa Taluk, Anantapūr district
5.	Peddamuḍiyam	Jammalamaḍugu Tāluk, Cuḍḍapah district
6	Tirumala	Chandragiri Tāluk, Chittoor district

From the 12th to the 17th century A.D there are a number of grants made to the above extant centres of Narasimha by the kings, feudatory chiefs and private individuals for the conduct of worship and offerings to the god. From the inscriptions, we come to know that *utsavās*, such as (a) *nitvōtsavas* (b) *vārōtsavas*, (c) *pakshōtsavas* (d) *māsōtsavas* and (e) *vārshōtsavas* were celebrated to the god The records mention that besides these utsavas, the rituals were performed to the god in the temples. In addition to the utsavas and rituals, other *utsavas*, viz (i) *Aṅgaraṅgabhōgas* (ii) *Divya Mōhotsavas* (iii) *Mahōtsavas* (iv) *Dōla-utsavās* (v) *Brahmōtsavam* (vi) *Rathōtsavam* (vii) *Tirumāḷḷu* and (viii) *Aṣṭamangalālu* were also celebrated in the temples

Besides these utsavas, certain comman festivals such as (i) *Ēkādaśi* (ii) *Kārthīka Deepavaḷi* (iii) *Śri jayanti* (iv) *Vasanta Punnami* (v) *Kshīrābdhi* (vi) *Vijayadāsami* (vii) *Pārvatiṭhi Mahōtsava* (viii) *Vasanta utsava* and (ix) *Pañchaparvas* were celebrated in the temples of Narasimha under study. It is interesting to note that an undated inscription from the Lower Ahōbilam, clearly mentions that the temple had celebrated 220 festival days in a year. All these utsavas, rituals and common festivals have been discussed in detail in the fifth chapter

Regarding the iconography of Narasimha, nine forms of Narasimha are found in the temples of Rāyalaseema. From the survey of the select centres of Narasimha worship, the images and sculptures of (1) Kēvala Narasimha (2) Girijā Narasimha (3) Yōga Narasimha (4) Sthauna Narasimha (5) Lakshmī Narasimha (6) Yōgananda Lakshmī Narasimha (7) Varaha Lakshmī Narasimha. (8) Prahalādanugraha mūrti and (9) Narasimha and Chēnchita (Narasimha wooing Chēnchita) are found in Rāyalaseema. From the available examples, the highest number belongs to Yōga Narasimha, then follows Girijā Narasimha, Sthauna Narasimha and Lakshmī Narasimha.

Among the above said nine forms, the following are the most noteworthy images and sculptures for their special features.

S.No.	Name of the image/ sculpture	Place	Plate No.
1	Girijā Narasimha	Tirumala	2
2	Narasimha seated on a lion	Tirumala	5
3.	Yōga Narasimha	Kadiri	10
4.	Sthauna Narasimha		
	(a) Stambōdbhava Narasimha	Kadiri	11
	(b) Narasimha fighting the demon	Upper Ahōbilam	14
	(c) Vidāraṇa Narasimha	Tirumala	19
	(d) Vidāraṇa Narasimha	Upper Ahōbilam	-
5.	Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha	LowerAhōbilam	-
6.	Varāha Lakshmī Narasimha	LowerAhōbilam	24
7	Prahlādanugrahamūrthi	Pennahōbilam	
8	Narasimha and Chēnchita	LowerAhōbilam	25

An interesting feature of iconography of Narasimha is that in the early sculptural representation at Peddamudiyam **(Plate 1)**, the lion face is natural and later on in the medeval representation it is stylized. According to the inscriptions available, the god was known by different names, viz., Sri Aubala dēvara, Varāha Narasimhanātha, Narasinga Perumāl, Alagiya Śingar, Ad.ppalhadi Śingar, Khadri Narasimhadēva, Kapala Narasimhaswamy, Yōgananda Narasimhaswamy, Prahalāda Varada, Sri Ahōbalēśvara, Ahōbila Vīra Narasimhadēva, Sri Ahōbiladeva and Lakshmī Narasimhamūrtu. The different names of god Narasimha mentioned above, are even now popular in Rāyalaseema. The survey of Narasimha images show

that Narasimha was regarded as one of the most favourite incarnations of Vishnu in Rāyalaseema. The study of the iconographic features of Narasimha reveals that the early images of Narasimha are two armed, but as the cult expanded, the iconography of Narasimha became expanded growing into multiple arms i.e. four, six, eight, ten and sixteen armed Narsimha. Narasimha worship as is evident from his iconography is influenced by Tantrism. In Rayalaseema area, the earliest and the popular form is Sthauna Narasimha (1335 A.D.). Along with this form, Lakshmi Narasimha was also popular. During the period of study, in general, the form of Lakshmi Narasimha was more popular than the other varieties of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema.

God Narasimha occupies the position of a cult deity rather remaining merely an incarnation of Vishnu. From the 12th to 13th century A.D., there was slow and steady development of the cult of Narasimha in Rāyalaseema. But from the 14th century to the 16th century, the cult was very much developed and it reached its climax in the 16th century. But in the 17th century, there were no new developments in the process of the popularity of the cult of Narasimha owing to a number of reasons which are discussed in the first Chapter of the book and this cult which is facing so many vicissitudes, continues as such even to this day.

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APPENDIX - TABULAR STATEMENT OF THE TEMPLES OF NARASIMHA SWAMY IN RĀYALASEEMA

S No	Location	Name of the Deity	[illegible]	King	Dynasty	Epigraphical reference
1	KURNOOL DISTRICT					
1	Pedda Cumbalam	Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	1137 A D	Sōmēswara I	Western Chālukyas	ARE 1956-57 B S No 46
2	Chinna Cumbalam Swamy	Yogānanda Narasimha	1229 A D	Jaitugi	Yādava	S , Vol X Part 1 S No.367 P 384
3	Ahōbilam Swamy	Ahōbila Narasimha	1335 A D	Prōlayavēma Reddy	Reḍḍies of Koṇḍavēḍu	AD Vol I Part I Guntur Dist S.No. 472 p 274
			1378 A D	Anavēma Reddy	-do-	Ibid Vol part Guntūr Dist S No 210 p 249
			1410 A D	Katama Reddy Vēma Reddy	Rajamahendra Varam Reḍḍis	SI Vol X No 577
4	Ālamūru	Narasimha Swamy	1550 A D	Ahubala Rā u	Vijayanagara	SI Vol XVI S No 174
5	Būdūru	Ahōbala Narasimha Swamy	1560 A D	GoburiAllubhala Rajayya Mahāra u	Vijayanagara	SII Vol X SNo 671
6	Annasāmudram	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy				-

APPENDIX

7	Narasāpuram	Ahōbila Narasimha Swmay			-	-
8	R Krishanā Puram	Ahōbila Narasmiha Swamy				-
9	Yedavada	Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy		-	-	-
10	Rāmateeratham	Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy				-
11	Kunukuntla	Kambagiri Narasimha Swamy				-
12	Uppalapādu	Kambagiri Narasimha Swamy				-
13	Kolimigundla	Lakshmī Narasmha Swamy			-	-
14	Servēpall	Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy			-	-
15	Rangāpuram	Maddilēti Narasimha Swamy			-	-
16	Mundlapādu	Maddilēti Narasimha Swamy	-			-
17	Timmana ipalli	Narasimha Swamy				-
II.	ANANTAPUR DISTRICT					
18	Kadiri	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	S1274 = 1352 A D S1289 1367 A D S1339 =1418 A D S1469 1547 A D	Bukka 1 Bukka 1 Devaraya 1 Sadasivaraya	Vijayanagara Vijayanagara Vijayanagara Vijayanagara	Sll Vol XVI SNo 4 S Vol IX SNo 438 S ,Vol. IX SNo 242 ibid S No 111
19	Chilamattūr	Narasimha Swamy	1367=A D	Bukka I Irugappa Jadayar	Vijayanagara	
20	Gonipeta	Narasimha Swamy	S1339 = 1417 A D			
21	Somagatta	Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	S1415 = 1493 A D		-	Capper plate Gazetter p 901

22	Jravakonda	Singēswara Mahādēva Narasimha Swamy	= 1503 A.D	Private grant		IAD, Vol - Part-Anantapūr(Dist.) Gutti (Taluka), S No. 144 P 14
23	Hiraya Dhalivata	Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	= 1512 A.D.	Ellayya, Servant of Krishnadēvarāya	Vijayanagara	S - Vol IX SNo 485
24	Kōtta Chinta Kunja	Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	= 1527 A.D		-	
25	[illegible]	Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy	=1529 A.D	Sri Krishna Dēvarāya	Vijayanagara	M Vol (S.A) No 272, PP.95-96
26	Chāgalēru	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Ś1455= 1533 A.D	Acyutharāya	Vijayanagara	S - IX, 560
27	Dharmavaram	Mandem Narasimha Swamy	Ś1095 1533 A.D	Chinna Trumalāyya deva	Vijayanagara	SII Vol XVI. SNo 106
28	Penna Ahōbilam	Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy	=1553 A.D Ś1478 = 1556 A.D Ś1481 1559 A.D	ChinnaTirumala Dēvaraju Sadasiva Rāya Koṇḍapu Dēvara Rajayya Devara Māharaju	Vijayanagara Vijayanagara Vijayanagara	SII Vol. XVI.SNo.187 SII Vol IX SNo 663 Ibid SNo. 425 p 26

29	[illegible]	Ahōbila Narasimha Swamy	= 1554 A.D	JillelaVengala-yyadeva Mahāraja	Vijayanagara	IAD Guntūr District, Vol 1 Part-I, SNo 414
30	Pāmiti	Sri Bhōgēswara Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Ś1476 = 1554 A.D	Sadāsivaraya	Vijayanagara	ARE, 351 of 1920
31	Yarrabommana-palli	Narasimha Swamy	Ś1477 1555 A.D	Timmadēva	-	Gazetter Anantapūr Dist p No 919
32	Gooty	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Ś1478 1556 A.D	Sadāsivarāya	Vijayanagara	M Vol (S A) No 153 Gooty Kalfiyat PP 1-2
33	Nāgasamudram	Kadirappa Swamy	Ś1480 = 1558 A D			
34	Penugoṇḍa	Narasimha Swamy	=1636 A D	Private Grant	-	Inscriptions of Madras Presidency Vol. 1 Anantapūr Dist SNo 152
35	Yaḍlapalle	Yōgananda Narasimha Swamy	= 1429 A.D	Allado Avobhalanna		ARE, 1921 Anantapūr District Gooty (Taluk) SNo 680 P 49
36	[illegible]	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy			-	Census - p 851
37	Pennanūru	Malōla Ōbula Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	-		-	
38	Salakam Cheruvu	Narasimha Swamy				-
39	Kundurpi	Kamba Narasimha Swamy	-	-	-	

40	Rallagunta	Kamba Narasimha Swamy		-	-	
41	Rōlla	Kaṁba Narasimha Swamy	-	-		
42	Kod Koṇḍa	Kaṁba Narasimha Swamy				-
43	Enumālavāṇḍla- pall	Kaṁba Narasimha Swamy	-			
44	Sasanakōta	Narasimha Swamy				
45	Jambulapādu	Narasimha Swamy			-	
46	Obuladēvarapalli	Ahōbala Narasimha Swamy	-			
47	Bukkapaṭnam	Ahōbala Narasimha Swamy			-	-
48	Yallanūr	Narasimha Swamy		-	-	-
49	Uddhihalli	Narasimha Swamy				
50	Āmidala	Narasimha Swamy		-		
51	Pennar	Narasimha Swamy				
52	Jambulapālem	Narasimha Swamy		-		
53	[illegible]	Narasimha Swamy	-		-	-
54	Jutūru	Narasimha Swamy				
55	Bōreddipalli	Narasimha Swamy				

CHITTOOR DISTRICT

56	Tirumala	Yōga Narasimha Swamy	Śī326 = 1404 A.D	Giri Dēvappa Private grant	-	Sr Vol. XVI S No.284
57	Srinivasapuram	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	= 1450 A.D	Private grant	-	IAD,Chittoor District, Part-I , S No 495
58	Tirupati	Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy	= 1485 A.D	Kandāḍa Kumāra Rāmānujyangar	-	Ibid S.No 3
59	Tirumalareddypalli	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Śī465 1543 A.D		-	
60	Kapilatīrtham	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Śī467 = 20 6 1546 A.D.		-	
61	Tarigonda	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Śī481 = 1559 A.D Śī768 1846 A.D Śī784 1862 A.D	Sadasivarāya Errappa Kusumasetti	Vijayanagara	ARE 446 of 1940-41 ARE 447 of 1940-41 ARE 448 of 1940-41
62	Chintamākulapalli	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy			-	
63	Pāpepalli	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	-			

64	Kothavēripalli	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	-	-	-		
65	Koppamapri	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	-	-			
66	[illegible]	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy			-	-	
67	Dāvalampēta	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy				-	
68	Medikurthi	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy				-	
69	Perumāllapalli	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy			-	-	-
IV CUDDAPAH DISTRICT							
70	Peddamudiyam	Ugra & Yōganarida Narasimha Swamy	Ś 1046 = 1124 A.D. 1551 A.D & 1557 A.D	Mahāmandalēswara Chiddana Chōla Mahārāja Chinnabānavayya Tribhuvana Mallādēva Gourayya& Nāgayya	Western Chalukyas Vijayanagara	Sii Vol. IX, Part-I S No 237 and S.No 207 M Vol (SA) No 272, PP.82-83 M Vol (SA) No.272 P.83-84 & ibid pp 83-84	

71	Jillavāripalli	Vīra Narasimha Swamy	12 & 13th Century A.D (1144-45)	Sadāsiva (Name lost) Hoyasala BallalaDēva	Hōyasala	A.P Govt. Report on Epigraphy for 1965, S No.9,
72	Koṇḍasunkēsula	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Ś 1266 = 1344 A.D	Mahāmandalēswara	Vijayanagara	Ibid, 367 of 1932-33
73	Vonūtala	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	= 1350 A.D	Bukka - I	Vijayanagara	M.Vol (SA) No 132, P 27
74	Gaṇḍikōta	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	= 1375 A D	-	Vijayanagara	Cuddapah Inscriptions P 20
75	Vōgunūtala (Veyinūtala kōna	Ahōbilēswara Narasimha Swamy	Ś 1369 = 1370 A D	Māngayyadēva	Vijayanagara	ARE 1938-39 Appendix S.No 338
76	Pottipāḍu	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	1529 A.D	Rāyasam Ananthayya Timmaruśu Yerramanāyudu	- Vijayanagara	Cuddapah Inscriptions PP.36-37.
77	Kongunuṭala	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	Ś 1455=1534 A.D	Achyutarāya	Vijayanagara	-
78	Pōrumāmilla	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	= 1532 A.D	Achyuthadevarāya	Vijayanagara	SII Vol. XVI, S.No 96
79	Imakallu	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	=1545 A.D.	Ahōbalayyadeva Maharāja	Vijayanagara	Cuddpah Inscriptions, P 389

80	Periyavaram	Ahōbala Narasimha Swamy	=1546 A.D	Mahamandalēswara Rāghavara u (Nañdyala Chief)	Vijayanagara	IAD Cuddapah District, Part I, S No 176
81	[illegible]	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	S 1470 1548 A D	Sadāśivaraya	Vijayanagara	-
82	Bommavaram	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy	S 1470 = 1548 A D	Ghennakēsavarāju	Vijayanagara	ARE 1938-39, Appen- dix-B S No 373
83	Timmanāyanipēta Swamy	Sri Lakshmī Narasimha	= 1552 A.D	Karanam-Ōbulapati		M Vol, (SA) No 116. Thimmanayanipeta, Kalfiyet PP 49-50
84	Moṭukaṭla	Ahōbala Narasimha Swamy	= 1552 A D	Sadāsivarāya	Vijayanagara	IAD Cuddapah District, Part-II, No 271
85	Pennapērūru	Narasimha Swamy				
86.	Chinnakōmerla	Narasimha Swamy				
87	[illegible] (Pulivendla)	Ahōbaleswara				ARE 1 of 1946 47
88	Yējūru Narasimha Swamy					

REFERENCE GLOSSARY

Abhaya	:	Palam open with fingers.
Abhishēkam	:	Religious rite of pouring or sprinkling scared water on the image of deity.
Āchāryas	:	Spiritual teacher
Ādri	:	Hill
Adippuliaḍi-Śingar	:	Narasimha Swamy (Alipiri at Tirupati)
Āgamas	:	Sacred Texts related to
Agniguṇḍam	:	Fire pit.
Agrahāram	:	The village given as donation to Brahmins.
Akhaṇḍa Deepam	:	Perpetual lamp
Aligiya Śingar	:	God Narasimha (Aligiya – Beautiful).
Alaṅkāra	:	Decoration, Ornamentation
Ālavaṭṭam	:	A thing used as a fan
Āḻvār	:	A Vaisnavite Saint
Amrutamani	:	Offering given to the deity.
Amrutha Snānam	:	Sacred bath with a mixture of honey, curd, cocoanut water and sugar.
Aṅgaraṅgabhōgas	:	Procession and rituals with pomp
Aṅkurārpaṇam	:	Commencement of festival etc ,
Amāvāsya	:	New moon day.
Aṅtarāla	:	Ante-chamber.
Aṅjali	:	Both palms joined in salution
Ārādhana	:	Special worship.

Ardhparyānkāsana : A seated posture in which one leg is tucked upon a seat, while the other is dangling.

Archaka : Priest - one who conducts worship.

Archana : Worship.

Ardhōruka : Shorts

Ātma : Soul.

Appāpadi : Prasadam

Atirasapadi : A kind of sweet cake.

Avatāra : Incarnation.

BalaBhōgam : Offering of naivedyam in the early hours of the day

Balihāraṇa : Cooked rice offered round the temple-deity

Beejaksharas : Seed words

Bhakti : Devotion to god, loyalty, faith.

Bhajan : Singing in chorus in praise of God

Bhōgam : Food offering to the deity

Bāṇa : Arrow

Binde Sēva : Bringing water from Koneru (well or pond) or river for worshiping the deity

Bramhōtsavam : Grand festival, annual festival.

Bugga : Water Spring.

Chakra : Disc, the weapon of Lord Vishnu

Chāmara : Fan made of Silk fibres for fanning the celestial beings.

Chandanam : Sandal paste

Chaturmasa Vratham : Four months Vratham

Dadhyōdanam : Curd food offerings.

Darsan : Audience

Dasāvatāras : Ten incarnations of God Vishnu

Deepa : Light.

Deepārādhana	:	Burning of oil lamps.
Deepasthambam	:	Lamp Pillar.
Dēvatas	:	Celestial beings.
Dhanurmāsōtsavam	:	Month during which early worship to God is celebrated.
Dhruvabēra	:	Presiding deity.
Dhūpam	:	The wave of incense smoke.
Dvajarohana	:	Inaguration of the festival
Dvajasthambham	:	Pillar infront of the temple.
Dhayāna	:	Meditation.
Dōlarohanōtsavam	:	Procession of a deity on a swing
Dvārapālakas	:	Sentenels on either side at the entrance of a temple.
Dvāradarsanam	:	Visiting the Lord at the main gate of a temple
Ēkādaśi	:	Eleven.
Ēkāntasēva	:	Worship involving placing the lord and his consort in a swing
Ēru	:	River.
Gadha	:	Club
Garudadēepam	:	The lamp being a big hallow earthen plate filled with oil with thickly twisted wicks of cotton thread, the wicks burning before the image of the deity
Gāligōpuram	:	Tower
Gandham	:	Sandal wood paste.
Garudasēva	:	Procession on a vehicle depicting the sacred kite.
Gala, Grēeva	:	Neck
Garbhagriha	:	Sactum Sanctorum, inner sanctum.

Garuḍa	:	Sacred kite, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu, a divine eagle.
Gāvi	:	Cave.
Gōpura	:	Main gate way
Giri	:	Hill.
Girdle	:	Belt
Gōḍavu	:	An umbrella.
Graivēyaka	:	Neck ornaments
Hārati	:	Wave offering.
Huvāhanam	:	Rituals connected with offerings to the god of fire
Hāri	:	Necklace
Hōmam	:	Sacrifice, Offerings made to the god of fire
Ishta Dēvata	:	Choosen deity
Jāgarana	:	Keeping awake through out the night in meditation
Jātra	:	Fair.
Jatamakuta	:	Crown of locks of hair
Jayanthi	:	Birthday.
Jñāna	:	Spiritual knowledge.
Kaifiyat	:	A document
Kalyānōtsavam	:	Marriage Ceremony
Kalyāṇamaṇḍapa	:	Wedding Hall.
Khadira	:	A kind of tree.
Katyavalambita	:	The pose of the hand when the arm is let down hanging by the side of the body and hand is made to rest on the lions.
Kīrtanas	:	Songs in praise of God

Khaḍgam	:	A sword.
Kaṅkaṇa	:	Wrist let
Kēyura	:	Ornament for the shoulder
Kirīṭam	:	Crown
Kīrtimukha	:	Lion's face
Kōnēru	:	Pond.
Kōras	:	Canine teeth.
Kōra-mīsalu	:	Sharp moustaches.
Krōḍha	:	Anger
Kucabaṅdha	:	Breast band
Kshētram	:	A holy place
Kundala	:	Ear ornament
Leelās	:	Plays
Mahādvāra	:	Main Entrance.
Maṇḍapam	:	A small room with pillars and roof all of stone, a structure for placing an idol
Mahātyam	:	Power of greatness
Mahōtsavam	:	Great festival
Makuta	:	A crown.
Makara Sankramana	:	The time when the sun returns to the north
Maṅjiras	:	Ornaments worn below the ankle
Makara Tōranam	:	A type of festoon in a temple, makara canopy
Mānyams	:	Inams.
Maṇḍaleswara	:	Head of a small region

Maṅgala Hārati	:	Flame of prosperity offered to the God at the end of an auspicious event.
Mangalasnānam	:	Bath of deity in a river
Maṭh or Mutt	:	Monastery, place of residence of religious mendicants
Mula Vigrahamu	:	Presiding deity.
Mudra	:	Gesture with fingers
Muḍupulu	:	A promised offer
Muggulu	:	Floor decoration drawn with flour
Mukhamaṇḍapa	:	Entrance hall.
Nāga	:	Cobra.
Naivēdyam	:	Offering in kind made to the deity
Nāmam	:	Vaishnavite caste mark.
Nāmasankīrtana	:	Sing in praise the names of the God.
Nambi	:	A priest.
Narasimha	:	Man Lion.
Nīlōtpala	:	The blue lily
Nityārchana	:	Daily worship
Nitya Deepārādhana	:	Burning oil-lamps daily
Nitya Naivēdyam	:	Daily food offering to the deity
Nritya	:	Dance.
Pādma	:	Lotus.
Padmāsana	:	An erect sitting posture with both the legs folded
Pallaki Sēva	:	Procession of a deity in a palandum
Pānakam	:	Jaggery water
Pārāyana	:	Recitation.
Pāruvēta	:	PĀRU means run and VĒTA means hunt.

Pāśa : Bandage.

Pōngali : A preparation with rice and green gramdhal

Pāṭṭa : Band.

Piṭha : Pedestal.

Prabha : A long stand with a concical tip and covered with a designed cloth

Prabhā mandalam : Nimbus

Prākāram : Compound wall.

Pradakshnam : Going round the deity

Prasādam : Food offering to the deity

Pratiṣṭha : Consecration, Installation.

Puliōra : A preparation with rice and tamarind juice etc.

Pūja : Worship.

Pūrnōruka : Trousers

Purāṇas : Hindu religious books.

Pushkariṇi : Sacred pond

Pushpamālalu : Garland of flowers

Pushpa Vāṭika : Flower Garden.

Rākshaṣa : Demon

Rāmānujakūtam : Sacred feeding house.

Raṅgamaṇḍapam : The front hall

Rathōdhsavam : Car festival

Sakatōtsavam : Carfestival

Samabhaṅga : Body with no bends

Sami : A kind of tree

Śaṅkha : Conch

Saṅkīrtanam : Recitation of the glory of the God.

Śatakam	:	Book of 100 poems.
Śejja	:	Putting the lord to bed.
Śiṅgapperumāl	:	God Narasimha.
Śilpa Śāstra	:	Science of architecture
Simhavāhanam	:	Lion vehicle.
Slōka	:	Couplet or quatrain in Sanskrit.
Sthaṁbam	:	Pillar or column
Stōtram	:	Uttering in praise of God or Goddess.
Smārtas	:	The sect of Non-Vaishnavite Brahmins.
Sukhāsana	:	A comfortable sitting posture
Soumyharūpa	:	Graceful form.
Sthalapurāṇa	:	History of the place
Stotram	:	Praising, utterings in praise of god
Svayambhu	:	Self manifest.
Talambralu	:	Main function connected with the marriage
Thāmbūlam	:	The whole apparatus of betel.
Tīrtam	:	Sacred or sanctified water
Teppōtsavam	:	Boat Procession
Tirukkōḍi-Tirunāḷ	:	Brahmostavam.
Tirumālai	:	Garland of basil levels and flowers
Tirumaṅjanam	:	Ablution
Tirunāḷa	:	Fair, Festival
Tirunakshatram	:	Natal constellations obtaining at the time of birth
Tiruppavai Utsavam	:	Festival Celebrated in Dhanurmasam

Tiruppaḷḷi - eḷuchchi : Dhanurmasa festival

Tiru-Tōmala : Garland of leaves and flowers for Mulavirat

Tōmala-Sēva : Decorating the God with flowers.

Tulasi : The holy basil

Udarabaṁdha : Stomach belt

Utśavam : Celebration.

Ugra-rūpa : Awe inspiring posture.

Usirikāya : Phyllanthus emblica

Utsava-Vigrahas : Procession images.

Utkutikāsana : Posture in which the deity sits with heels kept close to the bottom and with the back slightly curved

Vāhanam : Vehicle.

Vasaṁtōtsavamu : Spring festival.

Varada : Palm with the fingers poiting downwards

Vēdamaṁtras : Hymns of Vedas.

Vigraha : An image or idol

Vimāna : The tower over the main shrine.

Vīrāsana : Sitting with the left leg bent at the knee and resting on the seat and the right leg hanging

Viswarūpadarsanam : Showing of the original form of Sri Maha Vishnu

Yajñōpavīta : Sacred thread

Yagna : Sacrifice

Yōga : Meditation.

Yugadi : Telugu new years day Festival

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